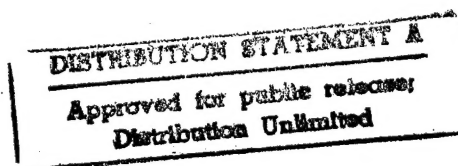


**IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF  
THE SURVEY OF ARMY FAMILIES II  
(1991-1992)**

**SUMMARY REPORT**



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**August 1995**

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**IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF  
THE SURVEY OF ARMY FAMILIES II  
(1991-1992)**

**A Report Prepared for:**

**The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC)**

**by**

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The SAF-II Questionnaire was designed and developed in 1991 by an Army research group led by LTC David Westhuis, director of the Research and Evaluation Unit at CFSC, assisted by Ms. Janet Campbell, with inputs from all CFSC Directorates. Dr. Florence Rosenberg and Dr. Joel Teitelbaum of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research assisted in questionnaire development and review. CFSC especially acknowledges Dr. Morris Peterson, Director of the Army Personnel Survey Office (APSO), who participated in the questionnaire design, selected the sample of Army spouses, administered the SAF-II questionnaire by mail, and processed the responses by computer to create a weighted database. Dr. Peterson then prepared response frequency and cross-tabulations and provided preliminary briefings on SAF-II results for senior Army leaders. Ms. Jeanie Payne of USAREUR is also acknowledged for preparing frequency data from SAF-II for a report shown as Volume I, a comparison of USAREUR and CONUS response frequencies.

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## SURVEY OF ARMY FAMILIES II (1991-92)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes findings from the Survey of Army Families II (SAF-II), a mail-out survey completed by 4,897 civilian spouses (96% female) of active duty soldiers. The SAF-I survey was performed in 1987. The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) is the proponent and sponsor for spouse studies on the quality of Army family life, military life stressors, and Army family program supports. SAF-II was fielded with a representative sample of spouses, Army-wide, for information on their use of, and satisfaction with, support programs and unit-family leadership. SAF findings are a yardstick for progress in Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) goals that fulfill the Chief of Staff's 'White Paper on the Army Family' (1983).

SAF-II tracks changes in Army family composition since SAF-I. It measures spouse perceptions of stress and coping with the Persian Gulf War deployment (Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm) and spouse views of organizational and personnel downsizing impacts on family and soldier. The **SAF-II Summary Report** gives a snapshot of Army family demographics, compares spouses in CONUS to OCONUS (USAREUR), and reports highlights of a thematic analysis of written comments by respondents. It contains a synopsis of a multivariate analysis, which correlates impacts of spouse responses about Army leadership and family programs to spouse satisfaction with the Army way of life and family commitment to an Army career.

The questionnaire was mailed to a stratified sample of 14,538 spouses in late 1991-early 1992, one year after a major deployment (ODS) and in the midst of dramatic Army downsizing. Due to timing of survey administration and extra length of the segment on Operations Desert Shield and Storm, SAF-II yielded a lower response rate than SAF-I. A much shorter SAF-III questionnaire will be administered to a cross-sectional sample of active duty Army spouses in early 1995, as a direct follow-on to SAF-I and SAF-II surveys.

### **Army Family Characteristics and Quality of Life**

Comparison of SAF-II to SAF-I show that between 1987 and 1991 soldier and civilian spouse family demography changed little in terms of racial or ethnic composition. Marital content of the 1991 Army rose to three-fifths of personnel, and there were more female soldiers in the force. Spouse age and duration of marriage rose in tandem with soldier's age, longer Army service, and higher rank. SAF-II divorce rates remained low and unchanged from SAF-I. Army families had relatively more school-age

children, but fewer infants and very young children. More than one-third of spouses reported that their soldiers had been deployed away from home for lengthy periods recently, and more family PCS moves occurred than in SAF-I.

Most spouses in the SAF-II Survey felt well-informed about the Army and prepared for military emergencies and deployments. A good majority felt comfortable dealing with Army agencies and using the Army health care system. Yet, a third of spouses felt dissatisfied with lack of concern for families displayed by their soldier's unit and with attitudes of unit leaders toward Army spouses. Dissatisfaction with installation leaders and civilian service providers was even higher.

Nevertheless, a large and growing (versus SAF-I) majority (65%) of SAF-II spouses felt satisfied with the kind of family life a spouse could have in the Army. Over two-thirds wanted their soldiers to make the Army a career, more so among spouses of higher ranking soldiers with longer service time. Lead reasons spouses gave for wanting the soldier to retain were Army pay and allowances, medical care and retirement benefits, soldier job satisfaction, a scarcity of civilian jobs, and a sense of patriotic duty. Few spouses chose availability of Army family support programs as a lead reason for career retention. A low 6% of spouses wanted their soldiers to leave the Army. They were mainly new, first term wives who felt greater stress and dissatisfaction with the Army and social isolation.

#### **Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (ODS) Family Impacts**

Family impacts of the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War (ODS) were divergent for spouses of deployed and non-deployed soldiers. A high proportion of waiting ODS spouses reported serious deployment and life event stressors. Most obtained informal social support from personal social networks; Army support from unit Family Support Groups (FSGs) and Rear Detachment Commands (RDCs). Relatively few spouses used Family Assistance Centers (FACs), and fewer still depended on crisis family assistance services. Most ODS spouses felt that Army support and public recognition was ample during ODS.

Almost all waiting ODS spouses reported they received helpful deployment information primarily from the deployed soldier by phone or mail, despite delays in communications. Their most frequent sources of non-military deployment information were civilian T.V. and radio news media, especially Cable News Network (CNN) in CONUS and Armed Forces Network (AFN) in USAREUR. Many spouses felt stress from spread of uncontrolled, false rumors about the mission, and from their loneliness for the absent soldier. Spouses of non-deployed soldiers who took on extra duties for the mission were also stressed and lonely during ODS,

but were less likely to seek informal or unit sources of support. They used installation assistance services at low rates similar to waiting ODS spouses. A small percentage of waiting spouses (with marital and/or psychological problems before ODS) grew dependent on Army service provider staff and volunteers for help during ODS. These spouses were among the least satisfied with Army supports and they coped least well with the deployment separation. Most ODS spouses handled their household and family needs well while their soldiers were deployed, and coped well with deployment stress.

## Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) Issues

SAF-II examined fourteen AFAP issues including a variety of family programs for spouse knowledge, use, satisfaction, and their contribution to the overall quality of Army family life. A large majority of all SAF-II spouses said they knew the basics of Army family finances, who contacts the soldier in case of a unit alert, and how to make contact with the soldier in an emergency. Almost all used installation shopping facilities which contributed strongly to Army satisfaction, especially the Commissary/PX and 'fast food' restaurants.

Modest levels of spouse satisfaction were associated with Army housing benefits; length of residence in one place affected spouse satisfaction with quality of life. SAF-II indicated that most junior enlisted and junior NCO families rented homes off-post, while most officers and senior NCOs lived in government housing on post or owned a home off post. 'Owner-occupied' was spouses' preferred form of family housing, followed by on post housing, while off-post rental was less desirable for all ranked groups. Frequency of PCS relocations did not affect overall spouse satisfaction with Army life. Few spouses used Army Relocation Services other than the Welcome Packet and Housing offices at the new post, usually satisfactorily. Senior spouses were more likely to use pre-move Army relocation services, raising their satisfaction with Army family support.

Military health care was used by almost all Army families. More SAF-II spouses (60%) reported satisfaction with the quality of Army medical care than in SAF-I. Multivariate analysis demonstrated that spouse satisfaction with Army family health care was the strongest programmatic contributor to overall satisfaction with Army life. But, widespread spouse reports of excessive clinic waiting times, perceptions that Army health services staff lacked respect for spouses and Army health advice and information was inadequate showed no improvement over SAF-I, and was similar across all ranked groups. More spouses used military health care insurance (CHAMPUS) in 1991 than in 1987, and a majority was satisfied. A minority used Army dental care and/or the Delta dental insurance plan, and most were satisfied. But, dental care did not affect overall satisfaction with family quality of life.

More SAF-II than SAF-I parents said their children attended quality schools in CONUS and OCONUS. Most felt satisfied with the schooling their children received, public, private, or military (DoDDS). A small percentage of SAF-II spouses used Army child care services, showing no change in frequency since SAF-I. Spouses with pre-school children often had problems finding and paying costs of adequate child care, and many felt that Army child care was inaccessible or program hours were inflexible.

Spouse satisfaction with child care contributed strongly to overall satisfaction with their family life in the Army.

Working spouses formed half the respondents and homemakers were one-fourth of SAF-II spouses, little changed from SAF-I. Work status did not affect their overall Army life satisfaction, but spouses who were satisfied with their paid or homemaker work status were more satisfied with Army life. The low percentage of spouses (10%) who volunteered their services to military or civilian organizations was no higher in SAF-II than SAF-I, but more of these spouses volunteered for active roles in unit Family Support Groups (FSGs) than in the past.

As expected, across a wide range of installation assistance programs, no single program accounted for overall Army family life satisfaction. A large minority of spouses (two-fifths) used Army Community Service (ACS) programs, and over half were satisfied. Highest use and satisfaction was reported with financial/budget counselling and Income Tax preparation assistance. Relatively few spouses used ACS Information and Referral (I & R), spouse training about the Army way of life, or special help, e.g., the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). Income Tax Preparation, EFMP, and I & R were important ACS programs for most spouses, whether or not they used a specific program.

Few spouses used Army crisis or emergency intervention services provided by ACS, AER, the Red Cross, Chaplains, and Social Work Services, but most users were satisfied. Army legal assistance, and two Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs (Army Community Libraries and Fitness Centers) were widely used and satisfied most users. The heaviest use of crisis programs was by junior enlisted spouses who also reported little use of MWR and voluntary activities.

#### **Spouses' Written Comments in SAF-II**

SAF-II spouse comments had a predominantly negative valence toward Army unit and installation leaders. Commenters were often critical of Army health care and civilian service provider staff. Their comments confirmed survey question frequencies, showing that a large minority felt there was insufficient concern for families by unit and installation leaders, and lack of respect from civilian service providers. Negative interactions with unit leaders and installation service staff affected spouse confidence in these supports. Spouses who felt the Army did not care for families had lower satisfaction with the Army way of life and least commitment to their soldier's Army career.

Negative comments about Army community and social problems were less frequent in SAF-II than SAF-I, suggesting reduced concern about family safety and quality of Army community living



conditions. But, many SAF-II commenters perceived a new erosion of Army family services and benefits and soldier income, and some feared soldier job losses due to downsizing. These sentiments confirmed responses on the quantitative survey results about downsizing impacts. Comments about ODS were critical of communication problems with deployed soldiers and lack of accurate Army information about soldier well being and safety in the Persian Gulf theater, verifying quantitative survey findings. Comments on the SAF-II questionnaire were more positive, viewing it as a communication process (hopefully) responsive to Army family member needs, and suggesting items for future SAF surveys.

### **Army Applications of SAF-II Survey Findings**

Taken together, SAF-II measures of Army family demography, comparison of response frequencies between CONUS and OCONUS spouses, the thrust of a thematic analysis of spouse comments, and statistical findings from the in-depth multivariate analysis, converged to demonstrate the strengths and shortfalls in spouse satisfaction and family well being tied to Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) issues. Command transmission of good information and training for spouses, improved unit and post leadership caring and support for families, and enhanced service provider treatment of spouses were key factors affecting spouse satisfaction with and commitment to an Army career.

Three areas of shortfall in family support, with clear implications for change in Army policies and practices emerged from SAF-II analyses:

- 1) A perceived need for a better unit climate of family caring as practiced by the unit chain of command, FSG volunteer leaders, and by RDC staff during deployments, and for greater unit FSG deployment functioning, especially in OCONUS (USAREUR). Expanded training of spouses and uniformed personnel for unit support roles, of installation civilian service provider staff, especially at Army medical care facilities, would be effective.

- 2) Perceived lack of accurate and timely command information, especially surrounding ODS, call for expanded Army media and clearer modes of leadership communication with families of deploying and non-deployed soldiers about contingency missions. Multi-media Army information reduced spouse distress from mass media misinformation and controlled rumors during ODS; and Army information helped alleviate downsizing stressors.

- 3) Spouse comments on the Survey of Army Families II were positive. SAF-II assessed achievement of AFAP goals, and showed the value of 'user-friendly' spouse surveys. Implementation of

SAF-II results could enhance Army policies, programs, and practices for family well being, spouse commitment, and soldier retention by raising the quality of Army family life.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### Purpose and Organization of the Study

This report summarizes the findings of the Survey of Army Families, 1991-92 (SAF-II), a program of Army-wide family research. The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) is the sponsor of SAF-II and the Army's proponent for the continuing Survey of Army Families. SAF-II is a direct follow-up to the first Survey of Army Families conducted in 1987 (SAF-I). In both SAF-I and SAF-II the Army surveyed a representative sample of spouses of active duty soldiers throughout the world, consisting of civilian women or men married to a soldier currently on active duty.

In 1987, the first Survey of Army Families (SAF-I) was sent to 20,000 spouses and garnered a response rate of 61%, representing a cross-section of family life in the Army at that time. The sample size was constructed to reflect approximately 4% of Army families world-wide. The primary objective of SAF-I was to assess the status of the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) and other Army efforts to improve the quality of life for military families. The questionnaire also provided spouses an opportunity to express their views as written comments that would be heard and responded to by Army leadership. Based on the perceptions of family members obtained from SAF-I, a many Army support programs were modified, expanded, or further developed to meet family needs. The Army authorized SAF-II to re-examine family issues in 1991 as part of a series of assessments of family programs and support under changing military life conditions.

Between the administration of SAF-I in 1987 and SAF-II in 1991-92, several significant events had occurred globally, within our national life, and in the U.S. Department of Defense, affecting all soldiers and their families. First, came the demise of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the end of a Cold War rationale for a standing, forward-deployed, active duty Army. The U.S. Congress passed legislation for drastic military downsizing in the post-Cold War period, but Army downsizing actions were put "on hold" in 1990-91 during the buildup and combat operations against Iraq in the Persian Gulf - Operations Desert Shield/Storm (ODS). Withdrawal of Army forces from Europe, organizational downsizing, and Army personnel reductions resumed in 1991, and became new SAF survey issues.

The Army senior command wanted to assess the family impacts of the Persian Gulf War and of Army organizational and personnel



downsizing, as well as measure the effectiveness of peacetime and wartime supports and family programs in the eyes of Army spouses. Thus, the second iteration of the Survey of Army Families (SAF-II) was scheduled approximately six months after the last ODS troops had departed from the Persian Gulf. By then, downsizing was well underway and Desert Storm soldiers and families had been reunited long enough for spouses to respond to post-ODS family questions.

The primary objectives of the SAF-II survey were to:

- Measure **changes in Army families**; and track **Army Family Action Plan (AFAP)** progress and concerns;

- Assess spouse use, satisfaction with, **Army quality of life programs and services**, and **unit family supports**.

- Assess the **impact of Operations Desert Shield/Storm (ODS)** and the **Army's downsizing** on Army families.

Survey questions were solicited from numerous U.S. Army field agencies and policy makers. Led by CFSC's Research Office, a team of behavioral scientists from the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) and Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) worked with CFSC program directorate staff to construct new items for the SAF-II questionnaire as well as provide continuity for comparison with SAF-I questions. Army researchers addressed the study objectives shown above, using a single research instrument to gather essential information that would not overwhelm spouse respondents. Added questions on USAREUR issues in SAF-II eliminated the need for a separate 1992 USAREUR Personnel Opinion Survey (UPOS) for soldier family members.

The Army Personnel Survey Office (APSO) prepared and administered the SAF-II questionnaire to a sample of 14,538 civilian spouses of Active Duty soldiers, in a stratified, random sample to ensure coverage of this population universe, representing about 4% of Army families worldwide. SAF-II surveys were mailed out between November of 1991 and January of 1992, calculated to assess the impacts of ODS and the downsizing simultaneously. The extra long questionnaire and survey timing issues (the November-January mail-out conflicted with a period of holiday leave time) led to responses from 4,897 spouses received in late 1991 and early 1992. The 42% response rate to SAF-II was lower than the 62% obtained for SAF-I; 61% of spouses responded from locations in the continental United States (CONUS) and 39% outside the U.S. (OCONUS). Adequate frequencies of response across all ranks allow statistical analysis and generalization of SAF-II results, Army-wide.

## SAF-II Data Analyses

Spouse questionnaires returned to APSO were computer-scanned and data tapes were cleaned and edited. Despite the rank-stratified, randomized sample selection process, response rate variations left junior enlisted grades under-represented among the 4,897 respondents. As in the analysis of the SAF-I (1987) survey, SAF-II raw data were weighted to reflect a 1991 Army spouse population universe of 306,798 across all ranks. APSO calculated the item frequencies and means for all questions in SAF-II and prepared frequency and cross-tabulation charts describing response items for briefings to Army leaders. SAF-II data tapes were forwarded to USAREUR to facilitate analysis of UPOS data elements, including the CONUS (non-USAREUR) spouse sample to compare USAREUR respondents to CONUS spouses (see Volume I). As in the SAF-I survey, 1818 written comments sheets were attached to completed questionnaires (CONUS and OCONUS), about 40% of all respondents. The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) performed a thematic analysis of these spouse comments (see Volume II), and an in-depth, multivariate statistical analysis examining fourteen CFSC-selected Army Family Action Plan issues for their social-psychological outcomes, as well as significant contributions by Army leadership and family programs to overall family quality of Army life for spouses in CONUS (see Volume III).

## Organization of the SAF-II Summary Report

The SAF-I and SAF-II surveys are designed to provide scientific facts and analytical information needed for understanding issues of relevance to Army families, assessing their current status, and building a foundation for further initiatives in support of Army families and their role in the Army mission. These analyses are intended for use by a variety of audiences, including: program staff at installations; major commands and headquarters; senior Army leaders and policy makers; family members and soldiers; the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP); researchers and audiences concerned with quality of life for Army families in an emerging U.S. Army-family 'partnership'. Major findings from three distinct detailed analyses of SAF-II data can be found in the three chapters of this **Summary Report**, and in the Conclusion, based on attached Volumes I, II, and III, as follows:

- Chapter 1 covers Volume I: (a report prepared by USAREUR) comparing response frequencies of USAREUR (OCONUS) spouses to those in CONUS and elsewhere. For the purposes of this Summary Report, most of the special response items pertaining to USAREUR family conditions have been omitted (see Volume I).
- Chapter 2 covers Volume II: a report prepared by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), consists of a thematic analysis of comments from the two-fifths of all SAF-II

respondents (CONUS and OCONUS) who chose to write them.

- Chapter 3 covered Volume III: a report by WRAIR that analyses data on Army spouses, located primarily in CONUS (97%), who make up the largest percentage of current Army families, and are becoming an even greater proportion of Army spouses in the 1990's as the downsizing continues and service members are withdrawn from forward-deployed locations stations to U.S. postings. Volume III is an in-depth, multivariate analysis of SAF-II responses to determine interrelationships and pathways between spouse behavior, program use and satisfaction, and spouse overall satisfaction with the Army way of life.

This Summary Report includes an Executive Summary and a Conclusions section, and results of the SAF-I Final Report and Comments' analysis. To facilitate comparisons to SAF-I, USAREUR respondents are termed OCONUS. The category of "Army Elsewhere" respondents - including 3% from Hawaii and Alaska, the Pacific area (Korea) and Latin America (Panama), and in CONUS (97%), are termed CONUS. Inclusion of Western Hemisphere and Pacific area respondents with CONUS spouses, and their exclusion from the OCONUS (USAREUR) spouses does not alter SAF-II results].

## CHAPTER 1

### ARMY FAMILY WAY OF LIFE: CONUS AND OCONUS

#### Part 1:

#### Characteristics and Behaviors of Army Spouses and their Families

Several diverse kinds of Army families are included within the broad category of soldiers with civilian spouses. These include:

- Spouses at different stages of a soldier's Army career and family development cycle: enlisted grades E-4 and below, senior enlisted (E-5 through E-9); officer pay grades (O-1 through O-3, and O-4 through O-7);
- Spouses aged 17 to over 40 years, with children ranging from infants to age 22 young adults, and spouses without children; including female and male civilian spouses;
- Families in which the spouse works (paid employment, as a volunteer, or both) to include civilians employed by the military; unemployed spouses, and Army spouse-homemakers who do not work at a paid job.

Survey data from SAF-II were weighted to provide correct proportions based upon sponsor's rank as of December 1991. SAF-II demographic data reported for both soldier sponsors and their spouses are summarized below (See Volume I question-item frequencies).

#### Spouse and Family Background Characteristics

On average, SAF-II OCONUS (USAREUR) spouses reported their soldiers were younger and were not married quite as long as reported by spouses of CONUS soldiers. OCONUS soldiers had spent somewhat fewer years in service and were slightly lower ranking than married soldiers in CONUS (1991-92), i.e., 73% of OCONUS enlisted soldiers were privates to staff sergeants (E1 - E 5) compared to 56% in CONUS. More OCONUS soldiers lived at the same geographic location as their spouse (95% OCONUS versus 87% CONUS). Spouse gender differences were 94% female spouses OCONUS, and 97% in CONUS, for an average 96% female spouses responding. The 3-4% of respondents who were male spouses in SAF-II was insufficient to allow statistical analysis. Eighty percent of OCONUS spouses said English was their primary language as did 86% of spouses in CONUS. Only 8% of OCONUS spouses who did not have English as a primary language

reported problems obtaining Army family services due to language difficulty. In CONUS, 13% of spouses said lack of English language was a problem in receiving Army family services.

Comparison of racial backgrounds of SAF-II spouses, CONUS and OCONUS, show no appreciable differences. Approximately 75% of all spouses were white, and almost 20% were black. The remaining spouses identified themselves as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander. The cultural backgrounds of CONUS and OCONUS spouses were also roughly equivalent, with 8-9% reporting Hispanic/Spanish origin or ancestry. Racial backgrounds of SAF-II soldiers were similar CONUS and OCONUS.

The same percentage of both OCONUS and CONUS spouses attended college (56%). However, CONUS spouses, on average, attended a little longer and thus more of them had earned degrees. CONUS sponsors (and their spouses) were older than those in OCONUS, and may have had greater access to educational programs.

Respondents were asked to assess their sponsor's military career plans. There were no numerical differences between the OCONUS and CONUS respondents. Sixty-five percent of SAF-II spouses indicated they would like their sponsor to stay in the Army until retirement, and almost 20% wanted their sponsor to stay in beyond his/her current obligation. Only 6% wanted their sponsor to leave the Army before completion of his/her obligation. The most frequent reasons spouses cited for wanting a sponsor to remain in the Army were military job security and medical care. Some 70% of respondents reported that their soldier was satisfied with assigned work duties in the Army. However, almost 65% of all respondents indicated they would like more information about future personnel reductions. Among those planning to leave the Army, more OCONUS spouses were aware of Army transition assistance than CONUS spouses (64% versus 44%).

### **Spouse Perceptions of the Army Way of Life**

The 1991-92 Survey of Army Families (SAF-II) included a number of questions relating to spouses' attitudes toward the Army and military life, their perceptions of Army attitudes toward families, and of Army support of families. Spouse perceptions of family deployment readiness were compared CONUS and OCONUS. Survey frequencies show that more OCONUS spouses felt they were prepared for military deployment or emergencies than were spouses residing in CONUS. Thus, more OCONUS spouses knew whether their active duty service member has a will (74%) and where it is (91%) than did CONUS spouses (69%, and 92% respectively). More OCONUS spouses (79%) knew if they had a power of attorney to use in the event their spouse is away, versus 72% in CONUS; and 61% OCONUS knew they have two weeks pay in reserve, versus 52% of spouses in CONUS.

However, most CONUS and OCONUS spouses said they were equally knowledgeable about Army pay and entitlements for their soldier: 85% percent of spouses said they knew how to read a Army Leave and Earning Statement (LES); 97% knew how Army family entitlements are handled; 97% were aware of their total family financial obligations.

Spouses were also asked about their knowledge of certain documents and procedures that are unique to the military and the Army: insurance entitlements in the event of injury or death; location of insurance policies and other important family documents; the U.S. Army's casualty notification procedure; who contacts their spouse when there is a unit alert/emergency; and procedures for contacting their on-duty spouse in the event of an emergency. Most spouses OCONUS and CONUS were knowledgeable concerning the location of important papers, how to contact their spouse in an emergency, and insurance entitlements (88%, 86%, and 82% respectively). Far fewer were aware of the Army's casualty notification procedure (roughly 45% knew of it in both groups). Answers to knowledge of Army procedures for unit alerts/emergencies showed that 77% of OCONUS spouses knew who contacts their spouse, compared to 69% of CONUS spouses.

SAF-II spouses were asked a series of questions on other aspects of Army life. A majority of spouses indicated they felt comfortable dealing with the Army medical system (almost 70%) and other Army agencies (over 50%). Two-thirds of all spouses answered they did not hold the Army responsible for 'solving all their problems' when the sponsor deployed, and did not feel spouses of deployed soldiers should be given 'special treatment'. Less than one-fifth felt the Army must resolve most problems for waiting spouses.

A leading spouse concern about Army family support was their perceived mistreatment by Army civilian employees. More than one-third of SAF-II respondents felt that Army civilian employees did not treat Army spouses with respect. The questionnaire also focused on spouses' perception of Army family support efforts. Asked about the respect the Army shows spouses, one-third of respondents expressed dissatisfaction. Asked about the concern their spouse's unit had for families, the percent dissatisfied rose to 40% OCONUS and 37% in CONUS. Despite high frequencies of negative perceptions, most spouses (70%) in both OCONUS and CONUS locations felt supportive of the soldier making the Army a career, and two-thirds were positive about the overall quality of their family life in the Army.

Responses to a list of problems varied considerably. Fewer than 10% of the respondents indicated problems with day-to-day stresses, demands the Army makes of family members, or "getting along" when the soldier is away on military duties. Separation from their extended family was a problem for 14% of OCONUS

respondents and 11% in CONUS. Approximately 20% felt that opportunities to achieve their personal goals while in the Army were a problem. The frequency of spouse concerns about the possibility of their soldier's involvement in military combat (27%) was lower than their concern with possibility of involuntary separation/release from the Army (36%), with no difference between CONUS and OCONUS response rates on these questions. When asked about specific kinds of problems, there was a wide range of responses for topics in which a respondent (or a member of the family) had experienced a problem in the last six months. Only 3% of SAF-II spouses reported family member problems with drugs and alcohol, or family violence. Among spouses with children, 16% had parenting problems. Some 25% reported job-related or emotional problems, and 40% reported stress problems. Over two-fifths (34% OCONUS; 45% CONUS) reported financial problems.

Spouses were asked about satisfaction with the support and concern the Army has for their family. A substantial minority (28%) said they were dissatisfied. When asked about unit-level leaders' treatment of families, three-fifths of CONUS and OCONUS spouses perceived unit leaders as encouraging unit-wide family activities. Almost half said unit leaders know little, if anything, about Army family programs, and 46% felt unit leaders showed little concern for the welfare of their families. OCONUS spouses were somewhat more negative about their unit leaders than were spouses in CONUS. But, 85% reported overall satisfaction with the Army as a way of life.

Finally, spouses were asked how many days during the last week they had experienced the following feelings or distress - felt they couldn't get along, felt sad, had trouble getting to sleep or staying asleep, felt everything was an effort, felt lonely, felt they couldn't shake the blues, or had trouble keeping their mind on what they were doing. A validated psychological scale constructed from these items measures individual mood, independent of other events. There were very few differences between OCONUS and CONUS in spouse self-reports on mood problems. More than a quarter of SAF-II spouses reported experiencing stressful feelings two or more days a week. But, a large majority (some 86%) reported having a friend, neighbor or relative outside the home available to listen when they needed to talk.

In summary, SAF-II frequencies show several perceived stress problem areas (centering around Army downsizing, the possibility of combat, and financial stressors). Spouse moods appear to respond to these sources of stress. But, a large majority of SAF-II spouses coped well and felt satisfied with the Army as a way of life in 1991-92.



## Family Health Care in the Army

This section contains a series of questions pertaining to Army medical and dental care. Most questions ask the respondents to rate their satisfaction with these programs or services if used during the past two years at their current location. Only data from respondents who had not PCSed during the past two years are presented below. Three-fourths of OCONUS spouses said Army medical care was available at their current location, compared to three-fifths of CONUS spouses. The delivery of medical care is a complex issue, and thus has been broken down into the following areas for discussion: thoroughness; timeliness; availability; attitudes of caregivers. Generic topics assist in understanding key components of Army health care delivery as perceived by spouses.

**Thoroughness of medical care.** Confidence in medical care is often affected by patient perception of the quality of care received. Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the thoroughness of medical examinations and accuracy of diagnoses, thoroughness of any treatments prescribed, and the advice they received about ways to avoid illness and stay healthy. There was very little difference among respondents OCONUS or CONUS. Over half felt satisfied with the thoroughness of the examination and the accuracy of diagnosis (54%) and treatment (53%), and almost half felt satisfied with the advice they received on ways to prevent illness (47%).

**Timeliness.** Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the time between the first call to set up an appointment and being seen by medical staff, the time spent waiting to see a doctor or medical support staff, the time it took for the pharmacy to fill prescriptions, and the amount of time the respondent had with doctors and medical staff during a visit. A majority of all SAF-II respondents was displeased with the timeliness of the medical care they receive, i.e. the length of time spent waiting to be seen in Army medical clinics - over half were dissatisfied, and one third were satisfied. Over 40% were displeased with the amount of time they had to wait to get medical appointments. However, only 21% of OCONUS respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the amount of time it took for prescriptions to be filled, compared to 42% of CONUS respondents. The amount of time spent with doctors and medical staff during a visit dissatisfied 22% of OCONUS and 30% of CONUS respondents, as a majority felt satisfied.

**Availability of care.** Availability of care goes beyond whether or not there is a medical facility at the respondent's location. Respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with availability of medical information or advice by phone, the availability of their medical records, the hours of operation of



the medical facility they use, their access to medical care in an emergency, and their access to specialty care if they need it. Respondents were generally satisfied with the availability of their medical records and the hours of operation of the facility, although more OCONUS respondents were displeased with the hours of operation than in CONUS. Nearly half (47%) of respondents were not satisfied with their access to medical care in an emergency, and 45% were dissatisfied with access to specialty care. When asked about availability of advice by phone, 44% OCONUS and 50% in CONUS respectively, reported dissatisfaction with Army assistance.

Attitudes of care providers. SAF-II respondents were queried on their perceptions of attitude toward family members by Army doctors, medical support staff, and office staff serving them. Overall, half of the respondents OCONUS and CONUS felt satisfied with the attitude of various care providers and staff. Almost 30% had no opinion, but 20% were dissatisfied with Army health care provider attitudes to families.

Health Care Grievance procedures. Half of all respondents indicated using official channels for filing complaints. Of those who did so, about 30% were dissatisfied with this process and/or its results.

**Military Health Care Insurance:** CHAMPUS (the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services) is designed to pay for civilian health services when and where military health care is either unavailable or the patient lives too far away from needed military health care facilities. CHAMPUS is used by nearly half of OCONUS spouses and two-thirds of CONUS spouses, and majorities of CHAMPUS users (74% OCONUS and 65% CONUS) were satisfied.

**Military Dental Care:** Military dental care is less available to Army families than military medical care. Dental was used by one-fourth of spouses, of whom 60% OCONUS and 55% in CONUS felt satisfied with the quality of dental care received. Dissatisfaction with the availability of dental care was frequent in CONUS (58%) and to a lesser extent OCONUS (41%). The military Delta Dental Program was introduced in 1987 to provide insurance coverage for basic dental procedures. About one-half of CONUS respondents reported using the Delta Plan, and one-quarter OCONUS. Approximately one-half of these spouses were satisfied with the Delta Plan. One-third of CONUS users and 18% of OCONUS users of the Delta Plan were dissatisfied.

## Housing and Relocation

**Military Family Housing:** SAF-II spouse housing preferences are somewhat different at OCONUS locations than in CONUS. While CONUS respondents were evenly divided between those who wanted to live on-post (44%) and those who wanted to own their own homes off-post (43%), 62% of OCONUS respondents indicated they would prefer to live in government quarters - whether on or off post - and 21% of OCONUS respondents preferred to own a home off-post. One-fifth of OCONUS spouses said the installation they live at or receive the bulk of support from is scheduled to be closed. This question was not asked of SAF-II spouses surveyed in CONUS.

Over 60% living on post and 68% in off-post government housing OCONUS were satisfied with their current housing. Two-thirds of CONUS respondents living in on-post government quarters were satisfied. Spouses renting housing off-post were least likely to be satisfied. While 35% of CONUS respondents said they rented off-post, only 7% indicated a preference for that type of housing. OCONUS, 27% of respondents said they rent off-post, and 14% preferred it. Also, OCONUS spouses said the average family wait for permanent government quarters at their current location was 3-4 months.

**PCS Moves:** OCONUS families are more likely to move due to a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) than are CONUS families: 83% of OCONUS spouses moved due to a PCS in the past three years compared to 71% of CONUS PCS movers. Two-thirds of PCSing spouses sought pre-move destination information of some sort from the Army. Most received a Welcome Packet from the receiving post and were satisfied with it. All spouses who PCSed OCONUS received installation/unit/overseas orientations, and four-fifths were satisfied. Half of OCONUS spouses used the lending closet, and three-fourths were satisfied. In CONUS, one-third of PCSing spouses used the lending closet, but 62% of users were satisfied. Two-thirds used Army pre-move destination information, and over half were satisfied. Few spouses (10%) used Relocation Services such as group or individual counseling, of whom one-third felt dissatisfied.

**Family Transportation:** OCONUS spouses more frequently resided closer to the nearest post than those in CONUS, with 68% of OCONUS spouses within 10 miles of the nearest military installation, compared to 57% of CONUS spouses. Driving a car in an OCONUS location can be problematic compared to CONUS due to higher insurance costs, vehicle maintenance standards, and different rules of the road than in the U.S. OCONUS spouses were somewhat less likely to have a current driver's license (85%) compared to almost all spouses in CONUS (94%). OCONUS spouses with driver's licenses were also less likely to have daily use of

a vehicle (84%) than spouses with driver's licenses in CONUS (92%). More spouses used public transportation OCONUS than in CONUS, and most OCONUS spouses (60%) said public transportation was adequate; fewer spouses (43%) were satisfied with public transportation at their CONUS locations.

#### Army Family Support Programs and Installation Services

Spouses were given a list of some 20 programs and services for families at Army installations. They were asked to indicate if they had used the program or service in the last two years, and if so, to rate their satisfaction. In general, more OCONUS spouses used these Army programs or services than did spouses of CONUS soldiers. For the purposes of this report, these programs/services have been grouped together by family needs each addressed as follows:

**Family Emergencies.** Several agencies provide services for families experiencing emergencies, whether they are in the immediate family group, or involve a family member elsewhere, such as a parent. The military American Red Cross provides emergency messages to family members, and grants to assist with the expenses accompanying such emergencies. Army Emergency Relief (AER) provides loan and grant funds to servicepersons and their families demonstrating need during an emergency. One-fourth of SAF-II respondents had utilized Red Cross emergency message services to send or receive a message, of whom about 70% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied. Only 6% had used an American Red Cross grant, and over three-quarters were satisfied with it. Army Emergency Relief was used by almost one in ten OCONUS respondents and about one in seven in CONUS. Almost 60% of OCONUS users and 77% in CONUS were satisfied with AER. However, 27% of OCONUS respondents who had used AER said they were 'very dissatisfied' (compared to 3% in CONUS), the highest level of dissatisfaction for specific Army programs or services in SAF-II.

**Education.** Over 40% of OCONUS and 45% of CONUS spouses said they had used their local Army Education Center. Approximately 80% who had used this program indicated they were satisfied with it.

**Chaplaincy Services.** Respondents were asked about the Chaplain's Family Life Center, the Chaplain Ministry, the Chaplain's Religious Program, and the Army chaplain assigned to their sponsor's unit. About 20% of spouses used one or more of these programs/services, with OCONUS spouses being more likely to use these programs than CONUS spouses. Overall, a majority of spouses were satisfied with Chaplaincy services, with between 61% and 85% indicating satisfaction depending upon the location and the specific service. Very few respondents were dissatisfied with most Chaplaincy services. However, 23% of OCONUS

respondents and 11% of CONUS respondents felt either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their unit Chaplain.

Commissary/Post Exchange. Most Army installations, OCONUS and CONUS, have shopping facilities which include the Commissary (supermarket), "fast food" restaurants, cafeterias, and the Post Exchange (PX). After medical care, Army consumer programs and services were the most frequently used, by 90% of SAF-II spouses. A majority was satisfied, more among spouses in CONUS than OCONUS. Some one-fourth of OCONUS spouses felt dissatisfied with shopping services at OCONUS Army installations.

Finding Housing. Three agencies provide services at Army posts: the Government Housing Office; the Housing Referral Office for off-post housing; and Relocation counseling/information to families. All three programs were more used by OCONUS than CONUS spouses, and less than half of OCONUS respondents indicated satisfaction with any program. OCONUS spouses reported greater dissatisfaction with the Army housing services (34% for off-post referral services, 23% for on-post assistance) than did CONUS spouses (19% and 18% respectively). CONUS spouses had greater access to civilian resources for off-post housing referrals (realtors, local newspapers, etc.) than did OCONUS spouses. This difference helps account for greater usage of off-post referral services OCONUS and for spouses' greater dissatisfaction with this Army service. Over one-fourth of SAF-II spouses felt dissatisfied with relocation counseling/information services CONUS and OCONUS.

#### **Army Family Assistance Programs**

The Army has a number of programs designed to assist with specific family and personal needs. These include family member and soldier legal services provided by the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Office, Social Work Services, local post Outreach Programs, and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program at Army locations. It is difficult to draw general conclusions regarding all types of services as their delivery varies by specific location more than other programs. Service/program usage ranged from about half of SAF-II respondents who used Army legal services, to fewer than one in ten users of the post Outreach Program. There was also considerable variation in respondent satisfaction between and within the programs. While legal services were satisfactory for 75-80% of users CONUS and CONUS, post Outreach satisfied 63% of OCONUS and 43% of CONUS users.

**Army Community Service (ACS):** In assessing the large variety of Army Community Service programs, SAF-II spouses were asked to indicate their usage and the importance of a list of 11 programmed services. Most of these programs are designed for both sponsors and their families, such as Information and referral (I&R), a

Consumer Affairs Program/Financial Counseling Program, and the Income Tax Preparation Assistance program. Other ACS programs, are targeted at infrequent but serious family problems, and are not used by large segments of the military family population. Examples of targeted ACS programs are the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), and Foster Child Care.

ACS programs used frequently by SAF-II spouses and judged important were Income Tax Preparation Assistance, and the Family Member Employment Assistance Program. Although few spouses used them, other ACS programs cited as important were: the Exceptional Family Member Program, and Information and Referral. Over half (55%) of spouses who used ACS programs said they were satisfied with ACS overall. Very few spouses were dissatisfied with ACS (3% OCONUS and 7% of CONUS respondents); the remainder was unsure.

**Family Assistance Centers:** The Family Assistance Center (FAC) is activated by ACS at the installation level during large scale deployment separations to provide one-stop information, referral and assistance to families, often on a twenty-four hour basis. Three-fifths of waiting ODS spouses were unaware of the existence of a FAC at their post, and about one-fourth used a FAC. Most CONUS and OCONUS users felt FAC assistance was helpful in ODS.

**Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR):** SAF-II spouses indicated which MWR programs they saw as important (regardless of use during the last two years). MWR programs included educational activities, leisure time hobbies, recreation/sports, and entertainment. Three-fourths of SAF-II spouses said they used Army Community Libraries, which were rated the most important MWR program. Half said Army Fitness Centers and post Youth Activities (YA) were important. Half of OCONUS spouses felt that post movie theaters were important. Overall, MWR programs were widely used and some MWR programs were viewed as most important.

#### Spouse Employment and Volunteer Work

**Spouse Employment.** While 63% of CONUS spouses said they had been employed between November 1990 and October 1991, only 25% of OCONUS spouses reported they were working during this period of time. Currently, 49% of all SAF-II spouses said they had paid jobs. Almost 75% of the OCONUS spouses say they had looked for a job in the past three years. Many who looked for work got information from a Civilian Personnel Office (at the installation), but some found it unhelpful. A larger proportion got information from civilian and/or military friends or acquaintances, most often cited as their most helpful job-finding resource. A majority of OCONUS spouses were aware of the military Spouse Preference Program, but 30% had not heard of it.

Volunteer Work. Worldwide, about one-in-ten SAF-II spouses reported they performed volunteer work. In OCONUS (11%) and in CONUS (10%) of spouses volunteered time to military organizations over the past three months; 9% OCONUS and 11% of CONUS spouses volunteered time to civilian organizations. SAF-II data show that the most frequent form of military volunteering (about half) was for the unit Family Support Group by both CONUS and OCONUS spouses.

#### Army Children and Other Military Dependents

**Schooling:** Seventy-five percent of OCONUS spouses and 80% of CONUS spouses have at least one dependent child at home, an average (mean) of 1.3 children per SAF-II respondent. About one-fifth of these spouses were childless in 1991, and three-fifths had at least one school age child. Most OCONUS Army children attended Department of Defense Overseas Dependent Schools (DODDS). A majority of children in CONUS attended local public schools off or on post, the rest were in private schools, or Section 6 schools on Army posts.

Most SAF-II respondents were satisfied with the schooling their children receive. For instance, almost 70% of OCONUS spouses with children in DoDDS schools indicated they were satisfied with the quality of education provided, as did 64% of CONUS spouses with children in public schools off post or on post. Spouses with children attending private or parochial schools (6% CONUS, 11% OCONUS) were best satisfied with the education quality, especially OCONUS.

**Child Care:** Over 90% of SAF-II spouses with children at home had at least one child 12 years old or younger in need of child care. All spouses reported they and/or their soldier provided most child care. Almost 70% said their youngest child received some form of childcare when they or their sponsor were not available. The most frequent care types were:

trained but not licensed baby sitters or neighbors. Use of Army Child Development Centers (CDC) and Army-licensed Family child care homes was relatively less frequent, overall, but used by more spouses OCONUS than in CONUS.

Army child care services are available in the majority of military communities, but access to Army child care was reportedly more difficult for OCONUS than CONUS spouses. Many spouses (OCONUS and CONUS) who said they used Army child care services indicate dissatisfaction with: ease of getting care; availability of care in Army Child Development Centers (CDC); flexibility of center hours; 'drop-in' care; and the high cost of child care.



**Adult Dependents:** The Department of Defense permits legal military dependent status for close adult relatives for whom a sponsor or spouse must provide more than half of annual financial support, including children 22 years or older living at home while attending college and parents (often a widowed mother of a sponsor or spouse). OCONUS, 3% of spouses had adult dependent(s) living with them, while the figure was 6% among CONUS spouses.

### Soldier Rank and Family Well-Being

Military rank is a highly visible and essential component of Army organizational and social structure. Governed by regulations, rank determines many aspects of a soldier's work life (assignments, advancement, retention, etc.). For analysis of SAF-II data, the effects of soldier rank on spouse responses, rank can be viewed either by:

(a) looking at responses to any given question by rank (univariate); or (b) analyzing the effects of rank and other variables on the perception of various aspects of military life (multivariate). Univariate findings are discussed briefly in this section; multivariate findings are explored in-depth in Chapter 3 (Volume III). This report uses standard rank groupings, i.e. private through corporal (E-1 through E-4), sergeant through staff sergeant (E-5 through E-6), sergeant 1st class through command sergeant major (E-7 through E-9), Warrant officer grades (WO-1 through WO-5), 2nd lieutenant through captain (O-1 through O-3), and major through colonel (O-4 through O-6).

More than anything else, rank grade within officer and enlisted ranked groups is a function of a soldier's time in service, which is to say that, in general, one cannot achieve a certain rank without having occupied the previous rank a minimum amount of time. Length of service in the Army also brings with it experience of and knowledge about the organization and its culture. The influence of time in service becomes evident when SAF-II responses are univariately broken out by soldier rank. SAF-II results indicate that in virtually every category, spouses whose enlisted sponsors were at junior ranks (privates to corporals) knew the least about the Army as an organization or about a spouse's role within the organization.

Thus, 75% of E-1 through E-4 spouses knew their sponsor's military pay entitlements, whereas 85% to 90% of spouses at higher ranks said they knew pay entitlements. And, 79% of private through corporal spouses knew the location of insurance and other important documents, while 90% to 97% of those SAF-II spouses in more senior ranks knew the location of these documents.

A rising response tendency with soldier rank occurs in all areas in which SAF-II spouses were asked to indicate their knowledge

about the Army and its services. As years married to a soldier rise, however, spouses tend to overcome deficits in acquired knowledge (excluding those who leave the military). SAF-II spouses of career soldiers, regardless of rank, reported similar frequencies who knew about Army documents and procedures. Summarized in Chapter 3, the SAF-II multivariate analysis gives in-depth understanding of the effects of rank on crucial components of spouse behavior and satisfaction with the Army as a way of life, and spouse commitment to a soldier's Army career.

## Changes in Family Quality of Life Perceptions

### Spouse Satisfaction with Army Life

In light of SAF-II quality of life perceptions of Army programs and services summarized above, we next look at change in spouse perceptions between the 1987 SAF-I and the 1991-92 SAF-II surveys. Comparisons presented here include:

- Spouse satisfaction with the Army way of life;
- Extent of problems with life in the Army;
- The Army's family support/concern at current location;
- Spouses' top choice for sponsor to stay in the Army.

Overall spouse **satisfaction with the Army way of life** showed a small net positive change in frequencies between 1987 and 1991-92 to nearly two-thirds of spouses who felt satisfied. Spouses who felt very satisfied rose 2% (from 11.7% in SAF-I to 13.7%) in SAF-II, while the frequency of spouse dissatisfaction declined by 1% since SAF-I.

Spouse perceptions of the **extent of problems with life in the Army** did evidence some interesting changes. SAF-II addressed the issue of the downsizing (not an issue in 1987), and results show it was the most frequently cited problem as indicated by 37% of respondents. In all the other response categories, i.e. combat possibility, conflict with spouse's personal goals, being away from one's family, Army demands of family, getting along alone and day-to-day stresses, there was a net decline in the number of respondents reporting these to be problems, as Figure 2 demonstrates. A reduction in problems perceived by spouses occurred despite deployment to the Persian Gulf for both spouses of deployed and non-deployed soldiers.

In the 1987 (SAF-I) survey, respondents were asked to assess **support and concern for families at their current location** practiced by their unit NCO and their unit officers. In SAF-II, post leaders were added as a response category. Results show that fewer spouses were satisfied or very satisfied with unit NCOs or unit officers in 1991 than they were in 1987. Post leaders received the lowest satisfaction of all Army leader categories in SAF-II.



Finally, when asked their **top choice of reasons for their sponsor to stay in the Army**, spouse answers reflected a recessionary economy, fears of downsizing, and patriotic feelings after Operation Desert Storm. There was no real change between 1987 and 1991-92 surveys in the frequency of spouses indicating soldier job security (30.5% in 1987 and 30.3% in 1991) or retirement pay (14.9%, and 14.3% respectively) as their top reason for wanting their sponsor to remain in the Army. As a reason for retention, spouse satisfaction with soldier's job fell, while satisfaction with Army family medical care benefits rose in SAF-II. A recessionary 1991 U.S. civilian economy led to spouse perceptions of a tight (civilian) job market, as a new reason for Army job retention. There was also a real increase (from 4.3% to 6.3%) in spouses who indicated "desire to serve their country" as a top reason for their soldier to stay in the Army.

SAF-II changes in spouse perceptions since SAF-I show that key differences pertain to two major events Army families experienced in the intervening years - Operations Desert Shield/Storm (ODS), and Army downsizing. SAF-II spouses are more likely to:

- be concerned about their soldier being involuntarily separated from service; and downsizing
- perceive less support from Army leaders than in the past;
- be aware of the benefits of military service in terms of job security, retirement pay, employment in a tight job market, and guarantee of family medical care;
- feel that soldier job satisfaction is not as important as it was in 1987 as a reason for staying in; and
- report "serving country" as a reason to stay in the Army.

### **Change in Family Program Satisfaction**

Comparisons of SAF-I and SAF-II were performed for a number of specific program areas: CHAMPUS and Delta Dental care; post food and retail services; and Army child care services. Specific results of comparisons appear in accompanying graphs. Cross-sectional changes in spouse use and perceptions are as follows:

More spouses were satisfied with Army health care in SAF-II than SAF-I. There was a substantial rise in **CHAMPUS use** in SAF-II, and similar level of satisfaction as in SAF-I. The **Delta Dental** insurance program became available after SAF-I; in SAF-II, 39% of spouses used Delta Dental, of whom one-half were satisfied.

Responses to questions on Army **installation food and retail services** showed that more SAF-II spouses were satisfied with the Commissary and Post Exchange (PX) than in SAF-I. On-post "fast food" outlets and cafeterias were added to the 1991-92 survey. A large majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with fast foods, but fewer were satisfied with cafeterias at Army posts.

**Child care** remained an area of real concern for many Army families. A small percentage (one-sixth) of spouses in both the SAF-II and SAF-I surveys reported using Army child care services, despite a dramatic increase in construction of Army Child Development Centers between 1987 and 1991. Three new issues concerning child care were added to the SAF-II survey: location of Army child care center; flexibility of child center care; and ease of getting this care.

In general, there was no measurable change in among SAF-II spouse perceptions of Army child care service compared to the 1987 SAF-I survey. In some child care issues spouses reported somewhat increased satisfaction (quality of education at the Child Development Center; hours of center operation). For other issues there was decreased spouse satisfaction (such as availability of space at Army child care centers, flexibility and cost of child care, for example).

## Part 2:

### Family Impacts of Operations Desert Shield/Storm and Downsizing

#### Families with Deployed Soldiers

SAF-II spouses were asked to indicate all places in which they resided during the ODS deployment to the Persian Gulf. Among total survey respondents, 21% reported living in USAREUR during part or all of ODS, while 77% were in CONUS for part or all of ODS; also, 9% reported other OCONUS locations (Alaska, Hawaii, Korean, Panama and other postings) for part or all of ODS. Since PCS moves out of USAREUR had been halted,<sup>1</sup> those reporting more than one location during ODS were most likely to have moved to USAREUR, or between CONUS and other OCONUS locations.

Some 37% of OCONUS and 36% of CONUS spouses reported that their sponsor deployed or relocated because of Operations Desert Shield/Storm (ODS). Almost two-thirds of deployed (or relocated) OCONUS soldiers were away from home for less than five months, while over two-thirds of the CONUS soldiers who were deployed were away for more than five months. In response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in early August 1990 there was a phased deployment of U.S. military forces to the Persian Gulf theater. Deployments from CONUS began in August; USAREUR troops (the vast majority of deployed OCONUS forces) deployed to the Persian Gulf beginning in December 1990, spent a shorter average time in theater than most CONUS troops.

Almost all (85%) spouses of deployed OCONUS and CONUS soldiers said they received information briefings and/or predeployment briefings from their command. Of those who received briefings, approximately 25% of OCONUS spouses and 30% of CONUS spouses expressed dissatisfaction with the Army's handling of the briefings. Also, over half of spouses with deployed soldiers during ODS, CONUS and OCONUS, were dissatisfied with the following Army actions: the amount of time off given to the sponsor to take care of personal and family business before leaving for the ODS mission; ODS information on the sponsor's unit and the sponsor's location in the combat theater; and Army information on ODS unit rotation (redeployment) policies.

OCONUS SAF-II spouses experienced fewer unit false alarms about soldier departure dates than did CONUS spouses. (This may be due to later and better planned troop departures from OCONUS.) Only 5% of OCONUS spouses reported being unable to say goodbye to the soldier before deployment, whereas 12% of CONUS reported having "no goodbye." There was more confusion about departure dates in CONUS where 54% of spouses reported multiple goodbyes, versus 44% in OCONUS. Spouse stress perceptions from lack of

goodbye or multiple goodbyes show 43% of CONUS spouses felt ODS soldier departures were very stressful compared to 26% of OCONUS spouses.

In aggregate, some 17% of OCONUS and 24% of CONUS spouses whose soldiers deployed for ODS, moved away from their Army installation for part or all of the deployment period. Over three-quarters of those who moved away (regardless of location) said it was very important to be near relatives/friends during the separation period. Those who stayed at a post (or returned after a short absence) did so to be near a good source of information about their deployed sponsor, to avoid disrupting their child(ren)'s schooling, and/or to keep their jobs. Moving was relatively easier for CONUS than OCONUS spouses, as most ODS movers went to stay somewhere in the United States.

#### Family Information and Supports in the Persian Gulf (ODS) Deployment Period

SAF-II respondents were asked to indicate **all** the sources of helpful information they received during ODS. The majority of spouses of deployed OCONUS and CONUS soldiers indicated they received the most useful information about what was happening during ODS directly from their sponsor, whether through letters or phone calls (approximately 70% CONUS and OCONUS). OCONUS, over a third of spouses credited Cable News Network (CNN), the Stars & Stripes military newspaper, and the Armed Forces Network (AFN) as sources of helpful information. For CONUS families, 90% used CNN as their main non-military news source for helpful deployment information, followed by other civilian TV stations and newspapers. Fewer spouses said ODS information received from Army media sources was helpful.

Spouses of deployed OCONUS soldiers who sought support from Army agencies/programs turned mainly to the small unit Family Support Group (FSG) or Rear Detachment Command (RDC). Families in CONUS were more likely (34%) to use the FSG than were those in OCONUS (26%) and about as likely to use the RDC (13% versus 15%). Approximately three-quarters of all SAF-II spouses who turned to the RDC or FSG felt these support resources were helpful.

Among OCONUS spouses, 35% found post/installation leaders least helpful, compared to 44% for the spouses of CONUS soldiers. A minority of all SAF-II spouses (9%) found post leaders to be somewhat helpful or very helpful. Installation Family Assistance Centers (FAC) were used by one-fifth of waiting spouses, a majority of whom found the FAC helpful. But, 26% of OCONUS spouses and 30% in CONUS who used the post FAC said it was not helpful during ODS.

ODS spouses were asked about changes in their support seeking behavior due to the deployment separation. Their participation in voluntary activities increased dramatically during ODS, especially so in CONUS. Approximately 33% of OCONUS spouses said their religious attendance at church or synagogue rose. A similar deployment period increase was reported for OCONUS spouse participation in unit FSGs. In CONUS, spouse religious activities rose 40%, and 47% increased their Family Support Group participation during the ODS separation. Voluntary military and civilian social/spiritual activities provided many spouses with feelings of support to face ODS deployment stressors.

Fewer OCONUS spouses experienced serious financial problems compared to spouses of ODS-deployed CONUS soldiers (21% and 31% respectively). As a result of the deployment, 14% of OCONUS spouses reported a family loss of income compared to 26% of CONUS spouses. Three-quarters of CONUS spouses reported the cost of deployment period telephone calls became a financial problem compared to 57% of OCONUS respondents. OCONUS spouses relied less on long distance calling because of prohibitive costs even before the Persian Gulf mission, and shorter length of separation from their deployed soldiers. The lower rate of ODS deployment period financial problems OCONUS paralleled claims that family financial problems were the least frequent reason for moving away from OCONUS during ODS. But, in OCONUS, ODS spouses felt financial problems were the third most frequent reason to move away from their installation.

Overall, a large majority of SAF-II spouses of deployed soldiers felt they managed well during ODS. More OCONUS than CONUS spouses rated themselves as managing well in all areas. The only areas in which a majority of all SAF-II ODS spouses rated themselves as managing average to poorly were: in handling their loneliness; and in maintaining their child(ren)'s participation in after-school activities.

#### Post-ODS Family Reunion and Downsizing Stressors

Over 70% of spouses of deployed OCONUS soldiers indicated their sponsor had returned from ODS deployment/relocation within the past five to eight months (from the time each spouse completed the SAF-II questionnaire), compared to less than 60% of CONUS spouses. Four-fifths of ODS spouses indicated "things are back to normal" at home. For about 70% of OCONUS families and 60% of CONUS families this process took four weeks or less, but more OCONUS spouses got things "back to normal" sooner than CONUS spouses. Approximately 60% of all spouses said their "reunion" with the returned soldier was easy, despite many reports in the news media highlighting ODS family reunion problems. Some 70% of OCONUS and 61% of CONUS spouses said they did not attend an Army reunion briefing, or receive printed materials on reunion at their post.

Although most ODS spouses felt it was generally easy to make adjustments after their sponsor returned from deployment/relocation, 20% of OCONUS spouses reported having difficulties in making joint household decisions and handling family finances after ODS. One-fourth of CONUS spouses had similar difficulties; they also reported problems meeting child(ren)'s expectations and with child discipline. In both CONUS and OCONUS, 13% of SAF-II spouses whose soldier had deployed to ODS reported dissatisfaction with their marriage to some degree after ODS, compared with rates of marital dissatisfaction affecting 6% of OCONUS and 11% of CONUS spouses prior to ODS. But, a large majority of ODS spouses (80%), regardless of location, felt as satisfied with the way their marriage was going after ODS as before this mission, and for some this satisfaction increased. (Field visits to Army posts in CONUS showed no long-term rise in divorce/legal separation associated with soldier participation in ODS).

#### Spouses of Non-Deployed Soldiers

Among spouses of non-deployed OCONUS soldiers, 92% said their sponsor worked longer hours because of ODS, while 85% of the spouses of non-deployed CONUS soldiers said their sponsor worked longer hours due to ODS. Over 60% of OCONUS spouses said their sponsor was often or very often kept at work beyond normal duty hours, was often required to work on the weekend, or often would not be able to predict when the soldier could leave work at the end of the duty day. Over 40% of the CONUS spouses reported similar increases and unpredictability of soldier duty hours, and weekend work.

In retrospect, most spouses of non-deployed OCONUS soldiers generally felt they managed well during ODS. Areas in which a majority of these spouses rated themselves as managing average to poorly were: handling their loneliness, doing volunteer work, arranging for child care, and maintaining their child(ren)'s participation in after-school activities. Their responses paralleled responses by spouses of soldiers who deployed to ODS. Their marital satisfaction rates were similarly high, and divorce rates were similarly low as ODS spouses.

#### Family Support Group (FSG) Functions for ODS

Questions pertaining to unit Family Support Groups (FSG) were asked relative to two time frames: before ODS (before August 2, 1990) and during ODS (from August 2, 1990 through May, 1991 or longer if the spouse returned after May). Responses were tallied by geographic location during ODS (OCONUS and CONUS) and whether or not the sponsor had deployed. On the whole, spouses who participated in unit FSG activities were more likely to view FSGs as helpful. Spouses who opted to not participate in unit FSG activities tended to hold the most negative views of their FSGs, CONUS and OCONUS.

There was a dramatic shift in perceptions among SAF-II spouses on how well FSGs performed before and during ODS. In general, spouses who held negative opinions of FSGs before ODS became more negative during ODS. Those with generally favorable opinions of FSGs before ODS became more favorable during ODS; but some spouses developed negative views toward FSGs again after ODS. For spouses who were aware of their unit FSG existence before ODS, a large majority (74% OCONUS and 82% in CONUS) reported the FSG was active before ODS. During the ODS separation period, among spouses of deployed soldiers who were aware of a unit FSG, 80% said their FSG was active.

Spouses were asked if they participated in FSG activities by talking with FSG members, attending meetings, doing volunteer work, organizing activities, or serving as an FSG leader. Among those who said their FSG was active, spouses of deployed soldiers were more likely to talk with FSG members than spouses of non-deployed soldiers. Participation in FSG activities during ODS doubled among CONUS spouses of deployed soldiers. However, spouses of OCONUS deployed and non-deployed soldiers (and of non-deployed CONUS soldiers) all reported decreased participation in unit FSG activities during ODS.

Spouses were asked how well their FSG had performed the tasks of holding meetings to pass on information, sending out newsletters, passing on information by telephone, organizing interesting and fun activities, providing emotional support, providing emergency assistance, working with unit leaders, and working with installation leaders. Responses were again tallied by "Before ODS" and "During ODS" and by whether or not the sponsor had deployed. Responses of FSG participants were separated out from non-FSG participants.

SAF-II spouses reported poor performance by FSGs during ODS in holding meetings to pass on information to waiting families. The greatest deficit was among OCONUS spouses of deployed soldiers who did not participate in FSG activities during ODS. Those who reported with poor or fair performance rose from 17% before to 37% during ODS, with almost all of the increase occurring in the "poor" category. With regard to FSGs sending newsletters to unit families, OCONUS spouses who reported better performance during ODS were those who participated in their FSG. Other respondents reported no improvement, more OCONUS non-participants among spouses of deployed and non-deployed soldiers placed FSG newsletters in the "poor" category.

Deployment information disseminated to unit spouses by the FSG 'telephone tree' is a key deployment period FSG function. With the exception of spouses of deployed CONUS soldiers who were



FSG participants, all other SAF-II spouses reported little change in their assessment of how well the FSG telephone trees performed during ODS. Spouses not participating in FSGs were the most dissatisfied.

Among FSG-participants there was no change in their evaluation of FSG organization of "interesting and fun activities during ODS", OCONUS or CONUS or whether or not their sponsors deployed. Non-participants had a negative view of this activity. Almost half of OCONUS non-participants felt they did not know how well the FSG had performed in this area during ODS, and another quarter said their FSGs had performed it poorly during ODS. Negative assessments by OCONUS spouses rose from 6% before ODS to 27% during ODS.

Creating emotional support between unit spouses was an important FSG function during ODS. Spouses of deployed CONUS soldiers who participated in FSG activities reported the greatest improvement: 29% before ODS to 44% during ODS of responses in the "good" (positive) category on how well their FSG provided emotional support. As with the other areas, non-participants didn't know much about this before ODS and were more negative about it during ODS.

Providing emergency assistance to families is another area of FSG activity during deployments. There was little positive change in evaluation of this area by FSG participants during ODS. However, negative views by OCONUS non-participants in FSGs increased. On the question of how well FSGs worked with unit and installation leaders during ODS, there was not much shift in spouse opinion except that OCONUS non-participants became more negative in both areas.

Overall, there were important modifications in SAF-II spouse perceptions of Family Support Groups before, during, and after ODS. Key improvements in perceived support occurred among the segment of of waiting spouses who participated in FSG activities during ODS, especially among CONUS participants, whose numbers doubled during the deployment period. Few spouses of non-deploying soldiers participated in their unit FSGs, CONUS or OCONUS, and there was a decline in their sense of FSG support during the mission. OCONUS spouse participation in FSGs did not rise during ODS, even among most spouses of deployed soldiers. OCONUS spouses tilted toward negative views of FSG activities.

In sum, most participating spouses felt FSG activities were supportive during ODS, while most non-participants did not. After ODS, FSG participation dropped off, especially among spouses of returned ODS soldiers. Overall spouse perceptions of FSG effectiveness declined in tandem with participation losses. The multivariate analysis (Chapter 3) examines FSG effects on spouse perceptions of Army support and well being during the ODS deployment period and in peacetime.



## CHAPTER 2

### THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SAF-II SPOUSE COMMENTS

#### Qualitative Analysis Approach to Spouse Comments

SAF-II provided an opportunity for respondents to voice any opinions or thoughts, not covered in the structured questionnaire, just as SAF-I had done. The end question invited comments on a sheet attached for that purpose. About two-fifths of all respondents took the time to volunteer comments. The Comment sheet was detached from each questionnaire and written themes were analyzed independently, by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) without prior knowledge (independent) of each spouse's other survey responses.

In preparing the SAF-II thematic analysis, WRAIR investigators used Comments categories developed for the 1987 (SAF-I) Thematic Analysis of Comments. Due to changes in the Army and world events (principally Operations Desert Shield/Storm), it was necessary to construct several new thematic categories while a few earlier ones were discarded for lack of SAF-II commentary. The methodology used was identical to that of the 1987 survey, i.e., all comments were classified in terms of broad categories, sub-categories, and valence (positive, negative, or neutral). For a full description of the code categories and methodology, see *Volume II, Survey of Army Families, 1991: Thematic Analysis of Spouses' Comments, Appendix B*.

Quantitative results from the SAF-II survey and from SAF-II comments are not directly comparable. Comments were neither representative or generalizable to spouses Army-wide, but the thoughts of self-selected respondents only. Furthermore, quantifiable survey questions offer a range of 'closed-end' responses (positive, neutral, and negative choices) while the Comments question was open-ended. For a variety of reasons, all voluntary comments tend to be largely negative when attached to surveys, focussed on dissatisfaction, complaints, etc.

The SAF-II thematic analysis (Volume II) is drawn from all spouses, including CONUS and OCONUS respondents. This is in contrast with Volume I which compared OCONUS to CONUS response frequencies, and the Volume III multivariate analysis which used only CONUS data. Given these qualifications, volunteered comments are a valuable adjunct to survey quantitative findings. They give individual illustrations, and elaborate and enrich structured responses. The Comments question gives each respondent an opportunity to raise issues that were omitted in the structured questionnaire, and to address new issues. Comments can help "explain" aspects of findings from structured

questions. The Summary Report does not discuss the entire range of SAF-II comments. The focus is on salient issues, particularly high volume remarks volunteered by spouses in both SAF-I and SAF-II, and frequently mentioned new SAF-II issues.

#### Change in Lead Themes of Spouse Concern, 1987 to 1991-92

Generally, the hierarchy of themes from the 1991-92 (SAF-II) comments is remarkably similar to 1987 (SAF-I) Comments themes, as follows:

**Health Care:** In both surveys, comments on Army medical care were the most frequent at 13% of all comments analysed. In SAF-II 88% of medical care comments were negative in valence, a slight increase in this proportion over 1987. The issues most often cited were:

CHAMPUS; waiting time; competency of care; attitude of health care personnel; and clinic/hospital staffing; and were usually negative.

Since nearly all spouses used Army medical facilities (97%), it is not surprising that respondents had a lot to say about Army medical care.

The quantitative survey indicated a fair degree of overall satisfaction with medical care (60% of spouses were satisfied with the quality, and 50% with the availability of medical care), but many aspects elicited dissatisfaction. For example, a majority of survey respondents reported dissatisfaction with health care services waiting times, a theme strongly reflected in the comments. Respondents who commented on medical care tended to give complaints in the expressed hope that improvements will result. The large volume of negative comments in this area is particularly important in view of multivariate findings (see Chapter 3) indicating that of all available Army programs, perceptions of medical care makes the strongest contribution to overall spouse satisfaction with Army life in both SAF-I and SAF-II surveys.

**ODS:** The second most frequently cited SAF-II theme is a new one, comments relating to Operations Desert Shield/Storm (ODS), which occurred since SAF-I. ODS represents 8% of the total number of comments in SAF-II, and over four-fifths were negative in valence. The following sub-themes form most of the comments relating to ODS:

- Army support for ODS and non-ODS families;
- Army and public recognition of non-ODS soldiers;
- ODS Army information issues;
- spouse/child psychological stress problems

ODS Comments were consistent with many SAF-II quantitative results, e.g., perceptions that non-ODS personnel were inadequately recognized and that Army information was an important problem for waiting spouses during ODS. The quantitative survey shows most spouses (of deployed and non-deployed soldiers) coped well during ODS. Spouse comments identify improvements needed to prepare for future combat deployments: clear-cut unit departure timing; Army media transmission and rumor control techniques; unit FSG activity - especially OCONUS.

**The Survey of Army Families:** In the SAF-I thematic analysis, a thematic category reflecting comments on the survey itself emerged, but was not ranked high in volume. In SAF-II, a greater percentage, 6% of all comments, raised the rank of this theme to third. Unlike most other categories, a considerable percentage of comments on the SAF-II survey itself were favorable (41%), and a smaller proportion was negative in valence. Furthermore, many of the negative comments consist of constructive criticism, identification of omissions in the survey, and suggestions for questions in future SAF surveys.

Most positive comments expressed appreciation for SAF-II, feeling that receiving this kind of questionnaire means someone cares about Army families. SAF-II quantitative findings show the importance of spouse perceptions that Army attitudes toward families influence family satisfaction with Army life. The most frequent negative spouse comments doubt that SAF-II will have a beneficial effect unless the Army pays attention to its' results. Spouse support for future SAF surveys depends on how well the Army applies SAF-II lessons learned.

**The Military Way of Life:** This theme reflects feelings about overall quality of life in the Army which are paralleled by data from the quantitative spouse responses. In 1987, spouse comments on the military way of life differed from other themes in that a majority of comments was positive. This was again in the case in 1991, rising from 57% comments with positive valence in SAF-I to 61% in SAF-II. Spouses told us, despite their specific complaints and dissatisfactions, they like and enjoy the Army way of life. They cited opportunities for travel, experiencing new cultures, developing personal independence, and feeling a shared sense of community in the Army. Results are consistent with spouse responses to the last item in the SAF-II questionnaire, "How satisfied are you with the Army as a way of life?" Close to two-thirds of SAF-II spouses replied positively, an increase in overall frequency from three-fifths positive responses in SAF-I.

A sub-category of items on perceived changes in the quality of military family life was added to SAF-II to take into account salient comments from SAF-I, and some changes in Army family

programs. SAF-II spouse views were mostly negative about the recent deterioration of benefits and income, loss of Army job security, etc. SAF-II quantitative data show a strong relationship between spouse satisfaction with the Army way of life and feelings about retention. Spouses who feel the Army way of life is deteriorating may become less committed to their soldiers making the Army a career, a matter of concern.

**Army Family Attitudes:** This theme refers to Army leadership attitudes toward families and spouses. It had 4% of SAF-II comments, the same percentage as in 1987. However, negative perceptions increased from 81% of the comments in 1987 to 89% in 1991-92, possibly related to spouse perceptions of deterioration of Army quality of life. The quantitative SAF-II results shows variations in perceptions of Army attitudes towards families, by level of Army organization. But, a minority of SAF respondents reported satisfaction with the degree of Army support and concern at unit, installation, and senior Army levels. These perceptions influence spouse satisfaction with Army life and retention. Spouse comments point to an explanation: many spouses feel that Army concern professed publically for families is only verbal, not practiced in Army leader interactions with families.

**Soldier Duties:** Two thematic categories relate to the soldiers' work conditions and environment. The first refers to unit climate, i.e., leadership, attitude toward and support of families, morale, etc. Over 90% of the comments are negative. Major complaints involve lack of concern for families, a perception that makes a strong contribution to overall spouse well-being. These results are consistent with the quantitative data which show only a minority of spouses are satisfied with unit leadership and unit family support. In terms of soldiers' work conditions, most comments are negative, citing long hours, stress, promotion policies and remote duty stations. Perceptions that some policies are unfair occur in other contexts: duty assignments, unit favoritism, and family housing, seen as needing Army improvements.

**Retention and Downsizing:** In 1987, only a small number of SAF-I comments referred to retention, i.e., spouse feelings about staying in or leaving the Army, ranked lowest in terms of volume of comments. In SAF-II, retention was rarely a Comments theme. But, a new SAF-II theme, "downsizing", included some comments on retention was added. Spouse feelings about involuntary release of the soldier, rather than voluntary desire to leave or remain in the Army, make up most of the comments. The structured survey included two questions on downsizing. Spouse responses indicated that, at the time of the survey, downsizing fears were a considerable source of stress, and a majority of spouses felt they lacked adequate information on the subject.

The overwhelming majority (94%) of downsizing comments had a negative valence. Expressions of fear and anxiety, anger at broken promises and unfairness, a real need for information, and feelings of lost quality of Army life after downsizing constituted most of these comments. Multivariate analysis showed that Army job security and benefits were major spouse reasons for staying in the Army, thus downsizing distress could affect future attitudes toward retention. Some respondents expressed feelings of betrayal by the Army about soldier jobs. These sentiments were reflected in substantial spouse dissatisfaction with senior Army leaders in the structured survey.

**The Army as an Organization:** This theme ranked second in 1987, but fell to the eight position in SAF-II. It was superseded by others, such as ODS themes, downsizing, comments on unit climate, and on the SAF-II survey itself. The issue of the military as an organization decreased from 8% in SAF-I to 5% of all spouse comments in SAF-II. It is likely, however, that this is a function of the methodology, rather than a numerically significant decrease. In 1991, ODS was a highly salient topic, and comments regarding assignment policies, inequities, and concern for the soldier may be found under this heading, rather than under the heading "overall military organization." of SAF-I. Another new topic, downsizing, also includes some spouse comments regarding policy that relate to the changing Army as an organization.

**Spouse Issues:** This theme ranks near the middle in terms of volume of comments in SAF-II (as in SAF-I), 95% of them negative. Over half the comments refer to job and career issues, including spouse problems establishing a work career, finding a job, and inadequacies of the Civilian Personnel Office. These negative comments show that paid employment remains an issue for some spouses, while volunteer work arouses little negative comment. The results have useful implications for future surveys of spouse work and Army employment programs.

**Other SAF-II Themes:** Several areas elicited a very small number of spouse comments. Less than 1% of comments were on each of the following themes: patriotism; children's issues; social or community problems. ODS themes, prominent in SAF-II, include some "patriotic" comments. The relative scarcity of comments about social problems in Army communities may be interpreted as a 'positive omission.' Since most comments tend to focus on the negative, this hiatus probably indicates that social and post community problems were relatively unimportant negative issues for spouses in 1991 compared to 1987. It may also indicate successes by Army policies and installation leaders in reducing serious social problems, such as crime or juvenile delinquency.

Finally, there were very few SAF-II comments about children's

issues such as child care, and slightly more about the quality of schools (1% of total), a decline in Army children issues compared to SAF-I. There may be some connection between continued low use (availability) of Army child care programs shown in SAF-I and SAF-II, but high satisfaction among spouse users of Army child care. Schooling drew greater frequency of satisfaction, and most spouses used civilian resources for child care, but were dissatisfied with access and cost. These Comments indicate a need to probe child care issues in future family surveys in ways too detailed for the Survey of Army Families.

#### Summary of Themes in SAF-II Spouse Comments

There are several recurrent themes within different contexts among the volunteered comments. First, is the importance of Army information and communication to spouses, a finding entirely consistent with the quantitative SAF-II survey. Comments on the need for accurate and timely information cluster in the ODS theme, downsizing, relocation and OCONUS issues, as well as a general category in which respondents point out a felt need for information and training meant for spouses new to the military or to the post. Second, is a theme stated earlier of Army unfairness to families or soldiers, citing inequities within the unit, or by Army policies and programs on family housing, PCSing, downsizing, ODS deployment, and Army spouse employment. Spouses were more likely to complain about a policy or program they felt to be unfair in principle or by implementation.

A third recurrent theme involves Army attitudes toward spouses. Noted earlier was an increase in negative valence of spouse comments about Army attitudes in general, rising from 81% in SAF-I to 89% in SAF-II. Negative valence comments also rose about Army civilian employee behavior toward family members, Army medical personnel treatment of spouses, unfairness in allocation of government housing and housing allowances by rank, and unit leadership practices towards soldiers and spouses. The survey reveals that a consistently substantial minority (one-third of spouses) was dissatisfied with respect shown them and with unit and Army concern for families in SAF I and SAF II. Spouse comments offer concrete examples of perceived lack of respect and unconcern for Army families. The multivariate analysis (Chapter 3) demonstrates that perceptions of Army attitudes contribute powerfully to overall life satisfaction among spouses and to their retention desires. Negative spouse-Army attitude perceptions needs to be addressed constructively to raise satisfaction.

While spouses' comments cannot be generalized statistically, they are valuable both for explaining quantitative results and as items for future surveys of Army family members. Key findings from the SAF-II Comments thematic



analysis are as follows:

- The comments support continuation of the Survey of Army Families. A high proportion of positive comments on the survey itself indicates that respondents appreciate the opportunity to express their attitudes, opinions, and criticisms. It would be useful to publicize SAF survey results and to demonstrate to spouses their positive effects on Army policies, programs, and practices.

- On both SAF surveys to date, medical care has led the field in terms of volume of spouse comments. The section on medical care was expanded in 1991 and should be continued in future surveys. A section on suggested improvements in medical care could include a ranking of service changes by importance. Of all Army programs, spouse satisfaction with medical care has the greatest impact on overall satisfaction with the Army.

- Although comments on Army life in general are positive, some spouses feel strongly that the quality of Army life is deteriorating. Future surveys should examine this issue carefully to identify factors and improve them.

- Items on retention contain only reasons for staying in the Army. A question on the major reasons for **leaving** could be included in future surveys.

- Comments on spouse employment reveal two key issues: problems of establishing a career and availability of jobs. The SAF asks detailed questions on work hours and pay, that are burdensome to respondents. These items can be abbreviated and new questions on job-related problems inserted. Spouse criticism of the Civilian Personnel Office indicates a need for improvements.

- Child care hours and costs questions increase respondent fatigue and probably reduce response rates; simpler questions can identify child care issues.

The importance of leading Comments themes were confirmed by multivariate statistical analyses of SAF-I and SAF-II frequency data (Chapter 3). SAF-II Comments clearly responded to dramatic changes in the Army since SAF-I (1987), and help "explain" some correlations between variables. By capturing new themes not asked in the survey questions, spouse comments forecast future Survey of Army Families questions. Comment themes showing declines in negative valence or fewer comments from 1987 to 1991 were often those which the Army has addressed effectively through the Army Family Action Plan and other means, such as community social problems. Spouse comments reaffirm SAF-II and other findings on the effectiveness of spouse participation in unit Family Support Groups during deployments, and raised a new issue



- the added stress burden on spouses of deployed soldiers who volunteer to lead FSGs in support of other unit families.

A fundamental message driven home by both negative and positive valence SAF-II comments was that spouses perceived a need for better Army communication to families, especially accurate, timely information for families of deployed soldiers on both Army support programs and soldier well-being in deployed units. Many spouses wanted more accurate information on downsizing. Spouse comments re-emphasized that behavioral change in unit and installation command leadership practices are essential, and that improved service provider attitudes and treatment of family members would reduce dissatisfaction. Implementing these changes - at low cost - could improve Army quality of family life in the 1990's, a time of rapid organizational change and confusion, and increasing military strain on soldiers and spouses.

## CHAPTER 3

### IN-DEPTH MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF SPOUSE PERCEPTIONS AND QUALITY OF ARMY FAMILY LIFE

Response frequencies to each survey question and cross-tabulations of different questions have yielded a tremendous amount of usable information from SAF-I and SAF-II, as shown by the results discussed in Chapter 1 of this Summary Report. Qualitative data from spouse comments complemented frequency data, extended it, and helped explain it, as shown in Chapter 2. An in-depth statistical understanding of survey frequency data can be obtained only through the application of multivariate analysis to the quantitative data set. WRAIR performed multivariate analyses on key social-psychological factors that contribute to spousal overall sense of quality of life in the Army, including fourteen AFAP issues judged important to family well being, soldier readiness, and retention of quality personnel. Before discussing the results of this multivariate analysis, some of the statistical tools employed in the analysis are explained below.

#### Statistical Correlation Approach to SAF-II Data

First, we begin with the statistical **score** itself, defined as the sum of spouse responses to a group of interrelated items. A numerical value is assigned by response categories for each item and these are added together for the individual's score. An example is the score on Army family support, assigning a values of 1 for "very dissatisfied" through 5 for "very satisfied" to each of nine items. The nine values are then totalled for the individual's score. Once we have a score, various analyses are done with that score, and the results are reported to be either significant or not significant. When we say something has **statistical significance**, it means that we have estimated the probability that the results could have occurred by chance; thus a statistical probability (**p**) of .05 indicates that differences of this magnitude would occur by chance only one in 20 times. Usually,  $p = .05$  or less indicates statistical significance. However, if the sample is large enough, even very small differences will be statistically significant. Their **substantive** significance must be assessed in terms of theory, hypotheses, and consistency of results in relation to qualitative findings and previous experience with Survey of Army Families data bases.

Multivariate analysis involves the summarization, representation and interpretation of data when more than one characteristic of the sample unit is measured. Each type of analysis allows a different understanding of the database, which together give a fuller explanation of the interrelationships between responses to similar items. Three statistical analyses were performed as a

part of the multivariate analysis of SAF-II data: correlations; analysis of variance, and path analysis.

**Correlations** measure changes in variable y when variable x changes.

For example, as rank (x) rises, satisfaction with Army life (y) also increases; this is a positive correlation. A negative correlation exists in cases where y decreases as x increases. The **correlation coefficient (r)** is the statistic which measures the statistical association between a pair of variables; it may be positive or negative. The letters "ns" indicate a correlation which is **not** statistically significant. An **r** of .40 or over is powerful; an **r** less than .10 is probably not substantively significant for our sized samples. Each result must be assessed individually. An **intercorrelation** is a matrix presenting the correlation, among a set of variables, each variable correlated with every other variable.

**Analysis of variance** is used to measure the difference in means (relative to their variance) between categories of a variable, e.g., variation in housing satisfaction for different types of housing. The results of an analysis of variance are reported as the **F value**. This is a statistic used in analysis of variance which measures the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent, e.g., the proportion of variance in housing satisfaction explained by current type of housing. The **F** value can also measure the proportion of explained variance in the dependent variable when a third variable is held constant, e.g., housing satisfaction explained by current housing type when desired housing type is controlled.

Lastly, **path analysis** is a graphic presentation based on multivariate analysis presenting causal relationships among a group of variables: exogenous or independent, intervening, and outcome or dependent variable. The model shows: a) the direct relationship between each pair of variables, when all prior variables are controlled or held constant; and b) the indirect relationship between each pair of variables, i.e., through their mutual relationship with prior variables in the model. The term **beta** is used to indicate the statistic used to measure the strength of the association between each pair of variables in a path analysis. Beta is similar to the correlation coefficient, **r**, but has the advantage of measuring the strength of a 'path' correlation when confounding variables are controlled.

Overview of SAF-II Findings on Army Spouses in CONUS

The major findings of the multivariate analysis of CONUS frequency data from SAF-II are summarized below. These findings explain how military and life stressors impact on spouse psychological well being in the Army. The analyses correlate overall spouse family quality of life responses to spouse satisfaction with Army health care, housing and relocation

programs, installation assistance services, spouse employment and employment assistance, child care and schools, and demonstrate how helpful or important other Army programs are viewed by spouses. Multivariate analyses show how spouses perceive caring, concern, and information from their soldiers' unit chain of command, Army installation leaders and program service providers, and their effects on spouse satisfaction with Army family life. These variables are examined in the context of influence of soldier's rank on spouse perceptions, where appropriate. SAF-II findings are compared to relevant findings from the 1987 SAF-I, keeping in mind that not all of the same variables were addressed in SAF-I. The multivariate analysis also assesses the impacts of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm and downsizing stressors on SAF-II Army spouse and family well being.

The response rate to the SAF-II survey in CONUS was 42%, a total of 3,006 usable CONUS questionnaires. This response rate was lower than SAF-I, principally due to necessarily extra length of the 1991-92 survey, but remained statistically usable and generalizable. SAF-II addressed issues arising after Operations Desert Shield/Storm by measuring its social-psychological effects once soldiers had time to reunite with their spouses and children and resume garrison duties. Administration of the SAF-II questionnaire occurred in November-December 1991 and January 1992 to ensure a full six months had passed since most deployed personnel returned from ODS. It took place at a time when Congressionally-mandated downsizing of the Army was in full swing. The months of November and December are traditionally a time when many soldiers and families take holiday leave, further reducing or delaying the likelihood of a timely response.

Junior enlisted personnel had the lowest response rate of all ranked groups in SAF-II, as in SAF-I. Therefore, data entries were weighted to reflect the number of civilian spouses of soldiers at each rank in the U.S. Army. Weighted responses were used to statistically represent the views of the entire Army spouse population, despite likely bias errors. The multivariate analysis covers CONUS-located spouses (97%), and the remaining 3% are spouses of soldiers in Hawaii and Alaska, Panama and Korea, and all figures are for the CONUS sample. USAREUR spouses were not subject to this multivariate analysis.

### **Problems and Stressors of Army Families**

SAF-II multivariate findings display the impacts of spouse problems with living in the Army and how these stressors affect spouse satisfaction with Army life. Family demographics covered in Chapter 1 of this Report, showed little or no racial or other differences between SAF-II and SAF-I, but spouse age,

educational level, and length of marriage rose, and families had relatively fewer infants and young children at home.

The possibility of involuntary separation was the most frequently cited military source of problems, chosen by 37% of CONUS spouses. The possibility of combat for the soldier was next most frequent (27%), followed by opportunity for spouse to achieve personal goals (20%) while living in the Army; these frequencies were similar to SAF-I responses. SAF-II spouses had a lower frequency of other problems in SAF-II than SAF-I, including: Army demands on family; being away from their own family; getting along alone; and day-to-day stressors. Some 60% of spouses cited one or two serious problems, but only 8% reported more than four problems. The most frequent daily life stressor was financial difficulty, linked to soldier rank and other factors, military and non-military. Financial stress correlated with spouse satisfaction with Army life and with measures of depression.

On a Depressive Affect Score derived from SAF-II questions, over four-fifths of spouses show very little depression, while 7% display serious degrees of depression. Both non-military life domain problems and military-life stressors contribute to spouse depression and to overall dissatisfaction with the Army way of life. Identified problems and stressors account for much of the relationship of depression to satisfaction with Army life in SAF-II.

### **Spouse Views of Army Leader Support and Concern**

Unit leader support and concern for families was satisfactory to over one-third of SAF-II spouses, a decline from nearly half of spouses in SAF-I. Satisfaction with unit officer support declined more than unit NCO support. The lowest frequency of satisfaction (one-fourth of CONUS spouses) was with Army installation leaders. Three-fifths of spouses felt their unit leaders were concerned about the welfare of families during ODS, half felt their unit leaders knew about Army family programs, and two-fifths reported that unit leaders encouraged family interaction and support activities across all unit families.

### **Army Family Quality of Life Highlights**

SAF-II included a number of questions on spouse attitudes toward the Army and military life, perceptions of the Army's attitudes toward families, Army support for families, and their feelings about their soldier making the Army a career, with results as follows:

- Over three-fifths of spouses were satisfied with the kind of life you can have in the Army and the Army way of life, regardless of specific discontent.

- Perceptions of Army support for families have a strong impact on spouse feelings about military quality of life.

- Respondents tend to have more positive perceptions of unit leader support than of Army leaders at higher levels, but fewer SAF-II spouses felt satisfied with unit leaders.

- Feelings about the Army as a career are strongly influenced by spouse evaluation of quality of life for Army families; more than two-thirds of all spouses would like the soldier to make the Army a career.

- Overall spouse satisfaction with the Army way of life rose slightly in SAF-II compared to SAF-I, and dissatisfaction fell slightly. Army health care spouse satisfaction rose and contributed to overall quality of life.

#### Contribution of Army Health Care to Family Satisfaction

Multivariate analysis demonstrates that Army medical care satisfaction has a very strong correlation with overall spouse satisfaction with Army life, i.e., those who are satisfied with their health care tend to feel positive about Army life in general. This finding from SAF-II was also prominent in 1987 SAF-I findings, and the data refer to medical care received in the last two years which most spouses have used. Volunteered comments (Chapter 2) from 1987 and 1991 surveys made Army health care was the single area cited most often (negatively). SAF-II indicates that Army spouses feel strongly about several aspects of military medical care, as follows:

- A majority of SAF-II spouses was **satisfied** with the:
  - thoroughness of examinations and treatment (58%, 57%);
  - amount of time with the doctor (51%);
  - access to care in emergency (55%);
  - attitudes of doctors and of support staff (55% and 52%);
  - availability of records (69%);
  - hours of operation (65%)

- A large minority of spouses felt **dissatisfied** with the:
  - availability of health information by phone (48%);
  - access to specialty care (42%);
  - time waiting to see the doctor (49%);
  - time for pharmacy to fill prescriptions (41%);
  - availability of medical care (34%).

- Specific health care services **used infrequently** were phone information, emergency care, specialty care, and official complaint procedures.

- Overall, three-fifths of spouses were satisfied or very satisfied; one-quarter were dissatisfied with the quality of medical care.

- Satisfaction with availability of medical care was lower - one-half of SAF-II spouses were satisfied and one-third were dissatisfied.

Implications: To the extent changes raise spouse health care satisfaction, overall satisfaction with Army life is enhanced, and spouse approval of the soldier's Army career may rise. Deterioration in health care services may dissatisfy more spouses can have deleterious effects on overall spouse satisfaction with Army family life and career.

#### Family Housing and Relocation Stress and Satisfaction

Family mobility is a way of life in the Army. Most spouses describe at least one Permanent Change of Station (PCS) in the last three years; other moves are also frequent. Multivariate analysis shows no correlation between the number of recent PCS moves and spouse satisfaction with quality of life in the Army. Most spouses used a Welcome Packet as pre-move information, the Army's lending closet and temporary Guest House lodging at the receiving post. Half used official installation information and unit orientation. Few spouses used Army counselling and information services when relocating (largely they were officer spouses) and most users were satisfied. Multivariate analysis shows that good relocation information contributed to spouse perception of Army support for families. Army efforts to expand use of relocation information and services would aid family quality of life.

Housing satisfaction yields a moderate correlation to overall quality of Army life satisfaction. A substantial majority of respondents live either in government housing on post or in rental housing off-post (72%), and a minority owned homes off-post. A large majority (87%) preferred owner-occupation of a home off-post, or government housing on post. Satisfaction was highest among owner-occupiers and a majority of spouses living in government housing were satisfied; 57% of homeowners and 30% in government housing were **very satisfied**. Length of time in current housing correlated with housing satisfaction, and gave a weak association with spouse satisfaction with Army life.

The most notable disparities between desired and actual housing are found in two categories: off-post renting is preferred by only 7% but is the current residence of 35%; conversely, 43% would like to own homes off post but only 22% do. The highest percentage of dissatisfied spouses is found among those in "other" housing which may include sharing a house, living with relatives, etc. (29%). However, off-post government and rental housing also had relatively high proportions of dissatisfied spouses (22% and 21%, respectively). The commuting distance of family housing from



the soldiers' post or duty station bears virtually no relationship to housing satisfaction.

In summary, a majority of spouses are at least moderately satisfied with their current housing. Highest satisfaction is found among owner-occupiers, followed by government housing, and off-post renters are less satisfied. Owner-occupied housing within commuting distance of the duty station raises spouse satisfaction with Army life.

#### Army Family Support Programs: Services and Facilities

Several generic installation consumer facilities are used by most respondents. Nearly all use the Commissary and Post Exchange (PX); most spouses are satisfied with these services. Spouse satisfaction rose from SAF-I to SAF-II for the Commissary, and for the PX in CONUS. In-depth analysis showed that satisfaction with the Commissary and PX correlates with spouse perception of Army concern and support for families, and contributes (strongly) to Army family overall quality of life satisfaction. Fast food outlets on post were used by more spouses are satisfied them more than Post Cafeterias. Army sustainment of these on-post consumer facilities contributes to quality of Army family life.

#### Spouse Employment Issues

Nearly one-half of SAF-II respondents were employed, mostly in traditional "female" occupations such as clerical jobs and teaching. Employment status per se is unrelated to overall satisfaction. However, aspirations combined with status affect overall attitudes; i.e., spouses who are not employed but **want** to work are more dissatisfied than either the employed or non-workers who have no desire to work. When seeking a job, most respondents used informal sources such as civilian and military friends, rather than the Civilian Personnel Office at their installation or civilian employment agencies, and a large majority said their informal sources most were more helpful. Spouse employment status varies by soldier rank, with the NCO and Warrant Officer spouses most likely to be working full or part time.

Unemployed Junior Enlisted spouses more frequently want a job, while officer spouses are more frequently homemakers, not interested in looking for a job. Among employed spouses, types of jobs varied by soldier's rank and spouse age and education. Spouse job satisfaction is associated with rank, especially for those who are very satisfied. However, multivariate analysis reveals that Army spouse employment status and job satisfaction do not correlate with Army life satisfaction. Spouse employment is a difficult area for Army programs to enhance spouse perceptions of satisfactory Army quality of life.

About one-tenth of SAF-II spouses engaged in volunteer or unpaid work either in military or civilian organizations, similar to SAF-I, with most giving more than 40 hours per month. Spouses who volunteered regularly show a positive correlation with their quality of life in the Army. Raising volunteer FSG participation, especially during deployments, enhances perceived sense of Army support for families and contributes to spouse quality of life. Hence, volunteering is a fertile area for expanded Army training and spouse participation by volunteers of all ranks, especially for Family Support Group activities.

#### Army Support for Dependent Children

Most SAF-II respondents have children, many of them of pre-school age. About four-fifths of these respondents use some form of child care; and most use child care services over fifty hours per month. Popular types of child care giver are neighbors and unlicensed baby sitters, who form half of all child care givers used. Army child care centers were used by 9% of spouses, and were not available to most families. Their usage rates were slightly lower than in SAF-I. Most users were satisfied with the location of Army child care centers and the quality of their educational programs. Fewer were satisfied with Army child care center availability, hours of operation, and flexibility to meet special requirements. 'Drop-in' child care was used by a small percentage of spouses and most were satisfied. Overall, spouses needing child care were least satisfied with ease of getting child care, flexibility of hours, and child care costs, with declining rates of satisfaction in SAF-II compared to SAF-I. The multivariate analysis showed that parenting spouse satisfaction with Army child care has a powerful effect on their perceptions of Army family support and contributes strongly to their satisfaction with the quality of Army life. Clearly, offering expanded access to Army child care centers, better hours, and greater flexibility of services would enhance spouse satisfaction with Army quality of life, as would better quality perceptions and more use of Army licensed family care homes.

With regard to schools, most respondents report satisfaction no matter which type of school is attended. Private and parochial schools elicited higher satisfaction, on-post public schools less. But, these differences were small, and did not affect quality of life perceptions.

#### Spouse Views on Soldier Making the Army a Career

Over two-thirds of SAF-II respondents want the soldier to make the Army a career, while very few (6%) would like the soldier to leave the Army before completing the present obligation. Most spouses attributed similar attitudes to their soldier. Spouse satisfaction with soldier making Army a career was related to rank. It was highest among senior career officer and enlisted and lowest among junior enlisted and junior officer spouses.

The multivariate analysis demonstrates that spouse satisfaction with the Army way of life correlates strongly with spouse Army career aspirations for the soldier. Involuntary separation of the soldier from the Army is problematic for a large majority of SAF-II spouses, most serious among senior NCO spouses and least problematic among officer spouses. Improved Army leadership efforts to communicate information on downsizing and Army family quality of life can raise career retention intentions of spouses.

Most Army support programs and assistance services produce no direct effects on spouse satisfaction with Army life or career aspirations for their soldiers, but soldier job and Army family benefits make a big difference. The major reasons spouses cite for remaining in the Army relate to financial security and family entitlements: Army job security and stability; family medical care; and military retirement pension and benefits. These factors are the most frequent reasons. Spouse sense of the soldier's satisfaction with current Army job, pay and allowances, and opportunity to develop job skills, are also important factors given favoring retention, as is the patriotic opportunity to serve our country. Spouse satisfaction with soldier's job declined in SAF-II compared to SAF-I, but spouse satisfaction with family medical care and desire to serve the country rose as factors in retention intentions. Support services for family members was the lowest (2%) reason for retention.

#### Family Adjustment and Soldier Rank

Soldier rank is statistically associated with a number of background demographic factors: age and education of spouse; years of service and of marriage. Higher rank also shows a positive, but modest, relationship to attitudes toward the military in terms of overall satisfaction, Army family support, and Army-family interaction.

Stress, adjustment during and after deployment, and depression are moderately related to rank: lower-ranked spouses display somewhat higher stress and depression and they tend to adjust less effectively both during and after deployment, but these associations are not strong. Most spouses, whatever the rank, adjust well and show positive affect. A composite score measuring total adjustment shows that junior enlisted spouses feel least well adjusted of all ranked groups.

Soldier rank has little or no effect on spouse evaluations of Army medical or dental care, hence improvements in health care delivery can have widespread positive effects for Army families. Although Junior Enlisted spouses were most likely to be not working but desired to work, a majority of spouses, irrespective of rank, were satisfied with their jobs. Housing satisfaction

was greater among officers, the group most likely to be homeowners, who had higher overall satisfaction with Army life as a result.

Utilization of Army services and facilities reveals several patterns related to rank. Some programs show no variation in use or satisfaction by rank: Commissary; PX; Social Work Services. Other programs are used more frequently by higher ranks: e.g., relocation services; and others by junior ranks, such as Army financial assistance programs and deployment period support services. In a few cases (e.g., unit Chaplain), spouse usage increases with rank. Finally, all Army recreation and sports MWR programs show similar use patterns - highest patronage by career NCO and senior enlisted spouses (E5-E9). Expanded spouse use of (and satisfaction with) MWR programs by first term and officer spouses could raise their perceptions of Army support.

A favorable attitude toward the Army as a career rises sharply from junior to senior enlisted spouses, and from junior officer to senior officer spouses. This correlation is linked to spouse age and length of service, as more senior ranks have invested more time in the Army and are closer to retirement. Spouse concerns about involuntary separation are most frequent among senior enlisted spouses and correlate with family quality of life perceptions especially for this ranked group.

A large majority of spouses (74%) feel well-informed and comfortable dealing with Army agencies and personnel, highest for spouses of career soldiers. But, many spouses feel negative about Army civilian employees; over one-third reported that civilian workers do not treat family members with respect, regardless of rank. Improved training of employees and quality control of employee interactions with spouses can be effective means of raising perceived Army support and family quality of life for most spouses. OSD Findings on Army Spouses in CONUS.

### **Deployment Stressors and Spouse Supports for ODS**

Close to one-third of SAF-II spouses reported that their soldiers deployed to the Persian Gulf during ODS. About one-fourth of CONUS-located spouses moved away from their Army post for all or part of the ODS separation period. Their major reason for moving was to be near friends and family. Higher ranking, older, respondents and those who were employed, or had children in school were far less likely to move away for ODS. Soldier rank, age, and ties to the local Army and civilian community were apparently crucial factors in the spouse's decision to move.

"Movers" were disproportionately first term and new Army spouses under 22 years of age, childless, with infants, and without school-age children or jobs. Spouses who were pregnant or expected to give birth during the ODS deployment period were most likely to move away. Spouses who moved were less well adjusted to deployment separation stress, and coped less well in ODS.

SAF-II spouses were evenly divided on deployment preparation support (as 46% found it satisfactory). Spouses who were dissatisfied with their preparation for deployment were more likely to move away from post during ODS, and these were primarily Junior Enlisted spouses. Most spouses felt Army supports were helpful during ODS. There were differences between movers and non-movers with regard to Army support service use during ODS. ODS spouses who did not move were more likely to participate in unit FSGs, and to find the FSG and RDC helpful; and to use Family Assistance Centers and post leader support and find them helpful than spouses who moved away. ODS movers were more likely to use installation crisis services by ACS, AER, and Chaplains for assistance with serious problems. These agencies were consulted by spouses with unresolved serious problems associated with higher stress and less perceived Army family support.

Compared to all Army support agencies and personnel, the unit Family Support Group (FSG) and the unit Rear Detachment Command (RDC) were key supports used by a majority of ODS waiting spouses. The small unit Family Support Group emerged as a key support program that worked for many ODS spouses, minimizing depression and raising satisfaction with Army support and the Army way of life. SAF-II showed active FSGs and spouse participation increased during ODS, but fell again in the post-ODS period. Among spouses of ODS deployed soldiers, career spouses were more likely to participate in FSGs during the deployment period than were first term spouses. A majority of participating ODS spouses said their FSGs were at least somewhat effective in providing support before ODS, more effective during ODS, but less effective again after ODS.

Multivariate findings indicate that active FSGs established in units before a deployment are most capable of providing support to the most spouses during a deployment separation period, especially to spouses from junior ranks who are least likely to be aware of an active FSG in the unit, or to participate in an FSG, until a deployment separation event occurs.

Exchange of letters and phone calls with the deployed soldier were the leading and most helpful deployment information source for most waiting ODS spouses. Information briefings through FSGs, and command briefings and pre-deployment briefings for family members were widely used and satisfactory to a majority.

However, Army information on the location of the deployed soldier, the unit ODS mission, and the unit rotation (redeployment) policies was not satisfactory to most spouses, and least satisfactory was the amount of time soldiers were given to take care of personal and family business.

Reunion adjustment was judged "easy" by about two-thirds of the respondents. The great majority reported high marital satisfaction both before and after ODS, and satisfactory family re-adjustment after ODS. About half of spouses of non-deployed soldiers experienced problems due to the soldiers longer and more unpredictable duty hours, but most coped well with the stress. Almost all SAF-II spouses felt U.S. public support for soldiers and their families was satisfactory for those who served in ODS, as was the reception given soldiers by the American public upon their return, Army recognition for soldiers who did not deploy satisfied only one-third of all SAF-II spouses.

Implications of SAF-II Multivariate Findings for Army Family Policies, Support Programs, and Training SAF-II multivariate findings confirm and extend the importance of statistical correlations that first emerged in SAF-I. Key unit factors contributing to quality of life are unit leader caring for families and concern for spouses; the active presence of established unit FSGs in peacetime and wartime, and of trained RDCs for deployment periods. Informal sharing of support among unit spouses flourished in positive unit climates, raising spouse perceptions of Army family support.

SAF-II analyses clearly show the primacy of soldier job security and retirement benefits in spouse Army life satisfaction and career retention desires. Also crucial to positive overall perceptions of the Army are satisfaction with medical care for the family, followed by Commissary/PX shopping subsidy advantages. Installation family support programs strongly affecting quality of Army life included child care programs and recreational activities such as the post library. Spouses across all ranks were equally dissatisfied with treatment by Army service providers, especially civilian employees, and by problems obtaining health care services, both of which affect quality of life.

Most spouse felt well informed about Army life, but more junior ranked and younger spouses tended to lack the knowledge and skills reported by older spouses of more senior soldiers. NCO spouses were more likely to use and to find MWR programs helpful, and officer spouses to participate and find unit Family Support Groups supportive. Full integration into the Army way of life calls for enhanced reaching out to less satisfied, less participatory spouses of Junior Enlisted personnel while retaining the attraction of military life for spouses of career soldiers, both enlisted and officer.



## CONCLUSIONS

### APPLICATIONS OF SAF-II FINDINGS TO AMERICA'S ARMY OF THE 1990'S

This **Summary Report** covered findings of the second Survey of Army Families (SAF-II) conducted in late 1991 and early 1992 from a sample of 4,897 Active Duty Army spouses. SAF-II assessed spouse use of, and satisfaction with, Army quality of life programs and family-oriented services and benefits. The survey was administered to a representative sample of Army families consisting of soldiers and civilian spouses (96% wives). The lengthy questionnaire contained added segments on Operations Desert Shield/Storm, organizational downsizing, Army family leadership, and Army family information.

SAF-II tracked changes in Army family composition and socio-demographics since SAF-I (1987), assessed Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) issues; measured family impacts of Operation Desert Shield/Storm stress; and revealed spousal downsizing concerns.

Brought together for the reader in this **Summary Report** are synopses of three main Survey of Army Families analyses:

- 1) Comparative survey response frequencies summarizing CONUS and OCONUS spouse perceptions of Army life in the early 1990's;
- 2) An abbreviated review of all survey participant comments from SAF-II (1991) compared to spouse comments in SAF-I (1987); and,
- 3) significance-tested multivariate correlations between spouse satisfaction with Army leaders and with support programs and spouse commitment to the Army way of life and soldier's career in CONUS.

More complete information from SAF-II is in attached volumes corresponding to chapters I, II, and III in this **Summary Report**: Volume I - frequency comparison of CONUS to OCONUS results; Volume II - an in-depth thematic analysis of respondents' comments; Volume III - a multivariate statistical analysis of CONUS findings. Also, see the SAF-II Questionnaire (CONUS/USAREUR), attached.

### Army Family Characteristics and Spouse Perceptions

Analyses of SAF-I (1987) and SAF-II (1991-92) indicate that the two cross-sectional samples of soldier-civilian spouse Army marriages and family composition remained similar in most respects. SAF-II families were gradually evolving toward increased soldier and spouse age and length of marriage, a reduced number of children per household, similar racial backgrounds, and slightly more diverse soldier/spouse gender mix - more women soldiers. Comparison of SAF-I and SAF-II results show that the Army remains a bastion of stable marriages by soldiers to civilian wives, with consistently low divorce rates from the 1980's into the early 1990's, despite a



mobile style of life and serious stressors from increased frequency and intensity of contingency combat deployment separations. Spouse satisfaction with their marriages and with the quality of family life in the Army was higher in SAF-II than SAF-I.

Nearly four-fifths of SAF-II married soldiers had children at home, similar to SAF-I, but there were no significant differences in spouse perceptions of children's issues. SAF-II showed no difference Spouse employment rates rose in the 1980's, but leveled off between 1987 and 1991: about half of SAF-II spouses worked for pay, and one-fourth were 'homemakers', similar to SAF-I spouses. Overall spouse satisfaction with Army life was similar regardless of work status.

Nevertheless, SAF-II displayed significant change in spouse attitudes toward family life in the Army and perceptions of Army caring for families compared to SAF-I. Differences were also evident between spouses at Army posts in the continental U.S. (CONUS) and OCONUS spouses who accompanied soldiers overseas, especially to Western Europe (i.e., USAREUR). Spouses located OCONUS were relatively less satisfied with family life in the Army than CONUS spouses, but more of them felt prepared to deal with military deployments and emergencies than in CONUS. SAF-II showed no significant difference by location in spouse knowledge about the Army. Most spouses knew how to handle soldier pay, entitlements, and key Army documentation, and how to deal with Army units and agencies.

Survey analysis revealed that a majority of SAF-II spouses felt comfortable dealing with Army service providers and the Army medical system when soldiers were deployed. But, many felt they were not treated with respect by Army leaders and civilian employees at Army installations. While, positive spouse views of Army family support in general rose between 1987 and 1991, a consistent one-third of spouses remained dissatisfied with Army family support efforts. A large minority felt their unit leaders did not show concern for spouses, especially OCONUS. A large minority continued to feel that unit leaders were unconcerned or uncaring about soldiers and families. Spouse perceptions of crucial Army-family interactions affected their Army life satisfaction and commitment to the soldier's Army career. Downsizing was a concern for half of Army spouses responding to SAF-II. Spouses fearing soldier job loss due to downsizing exceeded those worried about soldier exposure to combat hazards, especially senior NCO spouses. Fewer SAF-II spouses felt strain of geographic separation from their extended families due to their mobile Army way of life, but one-fifth felt that life in the Army limited their achievement of personal goals. Less than one-tenth were seriously concerned about day-to-day stresses of Army life, but one-third (higher in CONUS) had serious family

financial difficulties, an increase over SAF-I. Spouse reports of serious moodiness or psychological distress symptoms were relatively low and similar for SAF-II spouses, CONUS and OCONUS. Depression levels were related to their military and life stressors.

### **Quality of Life Perceptions and Army Supports**

Three-quarters of SAF-II families contained minor children at home and three-fifths of these families had at least one child of school age, similar to SAF-I families with children. Most Army children (in CONUS) attended public schools located off-post, while most children at OCONUS (USAREUR) locations attended a DoDDS school. Most were satisfied with the quality of their children's educational institutions, an increase over SAF-I. Minor differences in type of school satisfaction did not correlated with overall family quality of life.

For SAF-II spouses with pre-school and elementary school aged children at home, arranging for child care was a frequent, at times stressful, problem. Trained baby sitters and neighbors were the leading providers of day care for most Army children. Army child care centers (e.g., the CDC) were used by relatively few SAF-II spouses (9%), a similar finding to SAF-I. Dominant concerns among spouse parents of younger children were: unavailability of Army child care facilities; inflexible service hours; and lack of special care. Many spouses felt costs of child care were excessive, including Army-provided child care.

Multivariate analysis showed that spouse satisfaction with child care has a powerful effect on perceptions of Army support for families, and on overall quality of Army family life. Families with adult dependents (5%) were rare, more frequent in CONUS than OCONUS, and there was no significant effect on the family quality of Army life.

On balance, Army medical care was positively viewed by over three-fifths of SAF-II spouses, an improvement over SAF-I perceptions. Spouse satisfaction with military family health care benefits and services was the strongest single Army program factor contributing to overall spouse satisfaction with quality of Army life in SAF-II, similar to SAF-I results. Almost half of SAF-II spouses were dissatisfied with the difficulty and time consumed in gaining access to Army medical care, with delay and unavailability of specialty health services, and with inadequate health information and advice. Army dental care and DELTA dental programs were used by fewer spouses, and were largely satisfactory. Spouse satisfaction with Army dental care did not affect quality of life satisfaction.

Army family housing satisfaction contributed moderately to spouse overall satisfaction with Army life. The most preferred type of family housing was an owner-occupied residence within commuting

distance of the soldier's duty station, followed by on-post government housing. Rental off-post housing was least desirable. Length of time lived in current housing was weakly related to housing satisfaction. Spouses reported long waits for on-post housing, multiple local moves and frequent PCSing. These factors weakened the impact of Army housing programs as contributors to overall quality of Army life.

The number of recent family PCS moves did not affect overall spouse satisfaction with Army life. Spouse use of Army Relocation Services enhanced positive perception of a PCS move and contributed to the overall quality of Army life. The most used and satisfactory Relocation Service at a new post was the Welcome Packet and the post 'lending closet'. Fewer than half of all spouses reported satisfaction with Army assistance in finding adequate housing, especially low OCONUS. Spouse satisfaction with Army assistance in house-finding had a moderate effect on the overall quality of their family life.

Most SAF-II working spouses held service jobs toward the lower end of the income scale, and most found their current job through non-military contacts in civilian communities. Type of job improved with soldier rank, spouse age and educational level. Spouses seeking work were disproportionately among the junior enlisted, while senior officer spouses were most likely to be homemakers not wanting a paid job. Civilian Personnel Office (CPO) use was not satisfactory to many spouses seeking employment assistance (especially OCONUS). Spouses who worked contributed to total family income, but for many of them extra child-care costs off-set additions to disposable family income. Spouse work status did not alter overall satisfaction with the quality of life in the Army. But, spouses who were satisfied with either their current employment or homemaker situation were more likely to feel satisfied with their Army way of life overall. One-tenth of SAF-II spouses volunteered services to military or civilian agencies. Volunteering activity, especially for an Army unit Family Support Group (FSG), raised a spouse's sense of Army support for families and enhanced spouse satisfaction with the Army quality of life.

### **Army Economic and Social Assistance Programs for Families**

SAF-II assessed some twenty support services and entitlements at installations for the Army Family Action Plan in terms of family use and spouse satisfaction. Emergency program assistance, such as Red Cross emergency messages, Army Emergency Relief (AER) food lockers, loans or grants were used by relatively few spouses, and satisfied most of them. AER financial aid dissatisfied more OCONUS than CONUS users. Intervention programs targeted at Army families with special needs such as Family Advocacy, Substance Abuse Programs, and the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

were used by very few SAF-II spouses, but a majority of users felt satisfied. Chaplaincy religious and family support programs were used by about one-fifth of SAF-II spouses, and satisfied over half of all users. Least satisfactory to spouses was support by the unit Chaplain. Army Education Centers were used by nearly half of spouses, a large majority of whom were satisfied. Spouse satisfaction with a specific Army social assistance program did not correlate directly with overall satisfaction with Army life. Combined, these programs showed rising spouse perception of Army support for families from SAF-I to SAF-II.

Army Community Service (ACS) family assistance programs were used by two-fifths of SAF-II spouses, and satisfied most users. Information and Referral and Income Tax Preparation programs were viewed as among the most important, along with the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). Several Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs were used by many spouses, and most users felt satisfied. The most frequently used MWR programs were Army Community Libraries and Fitness Centers. SAF-II spouses rated the Army Community Library as an important MWR program on their installation.

The most frequently used Army services (after health care) were post shopping facilities, Commissary/PX and 'fast food' restaurants, with high and improving rates of satisfaction. The PX and other business services gave high satisfaction in CONUS, but the PX dissatisfied a large minority of USAREUR spouses in SAF-II. Spouse satisfaction with Commissary/PX correlated with perceptions of Army concern and support for families, and contributed strongly to spouse satisfaction with Army life in CONUS.

### **ODS Deployment, Family Stress, and Spouse Supports**

Nearly one-third of SAF-II spouses reported their soldiers deployed to the Persian Gulf or were relocated for Operation Desert Shield/ Storm duties. Two-thirds of the spouses of ODS-deployed soldiers, in CONUS, reported the separation lasted for more than five months; most spouses of USAREUR soldiers - who deployed to Saudi Arabia months later than CONUS soldiers - were separated for an average two-three months. A majority of waiting spouses used command briefings and pre-deployment unit briefings, and felt they were helpful during the ODS deployment. Over half felt the amount of time their unit leaders gave soldier to handle personal and family business before leaving on the ODS mission was insufficient. Most of these spouses experienced turmoil surrounding ODS departure dates; over half went through multiple goodbyes. Perceived stress of uncertain ODS goodbyes was more frequent in CONUS. Serious sources of ODS spouse stress was the soldier's absence and uncertainties, rumors, and fear about combat missions.

One-fifth of spouses with soldiers deployed to the Persian Gulf moved away from their Army post for part or all of the separation period, more in CONUS (where it was easier and less costly) than in USAREUR. Their lead reason for moving away during ODS was the importance the spouse attached to being near relatives while the soldier was deployed. The main reasons spouse gave for remaining at the installation were: to be near a source of accurate Army information about their deployed soldier; to avoid disrupting children's schooling; and to keep their jobs. Career spouses with school-age children were most likely to remain at post, and junior enlisted spouses with no children were most likely to leave for the duration of the ODS mission, as were pregnant spouses and parents of infants. Multivariate analysis showed 'ODS movers' coped less well with deployment and life stressors of separation. They felt the Army was less supportive of families than ODS waiting spouses who stayed at their soldier's post during the deployment period.

Most waiting spouses said that useful information about the ODS mission came via communications with their deployed soldiers, mainly via exchange of letters and international phone calls. Many also got deployment information informally from other unit spouses. Those who lacked informal support networks tended to cope poorly with the ODS deployment and some became dependent on Army agencies. A majority got accurate ODS information from their unit leaders and Rear Detachment Commands (RDC), unit Family Support Groups (FSG), and command briefings. Cable News Network (CNN) was a leading source of useful non-military media information in CONUS (90% of spouses), followed by other T.V./radio broadcasts and newspapers. USAREUR spouses listened to CNN and Armed Forces Network (AFN) broadcasts, and read Stars and Stripes, a military newspaper.

Attendance at church or religious activities off-post rose by one third during ODS, and gave support. Small unit Family Support Groups (FSGs) were the most frequently used of all Army resource for social-psychological support or information in CONUS. Waiting spouse participation in FSGs doubled during ODS, and perceived support rose. OCONUS, ODS spouses participated less in unit FSGs, similar to spouses of non-deployed soldiers and felt a decline in FSG support during the ODS period. In sum, waiting ODS spouses who participated in FSG activities tended to feel better supported by the Army, had less deployment stress, and more satisfaction than non-participants.

Specific FSG activities received very different effectiveness ratings from waiting ODS spouses - FSG meetings and FSG newsletters were judged the most helpful. Non-participating spouses expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with FSG support effectiveness. Spouse views of FSGs after ODS changed for the better or the worse in relation to their ODS period participation. Three-quarters of

spouses using FSGs for ODS support said they were helpful sources of Army information, emotional solace, and stress reduction. Awareness of, and participation in, unit FSG activities declined to pre-ODS levels after ODS.

Rear Detachment Commands (RDCs) were used less frequently by waiting spouses in CONUS than OCONUS, and half the users said the RDC was a helpful source of ODS information. Army installation leaders were seen as less helpful to ODS spouses than were unit supports in both CONUS and OCONUS. Family Assistance Centers (FACs) for waiting families at deploying posts were known to two-fifths of ODS spouses and used by one-fifth, over half of whom found the FAC assistance helpful. Army-family unit level supports with greater informal ties were more helpful to more spouses during ODS.

### **Spouse Handling of ODS Stressors**

Serious financial problems 'caused by' ODS affected one-third of waiting spouses, more frequently in CONUS than OCONUS. ODS spouses in CONUS reported greater loss of income and higher long distance phone bills than those in USAREUR. Financial problems also prompted more CONUS than OCONUS spouses to move away from their installation during the ODS deployment period. A small percentage of ODS spouses sought Army financial assistance. Most were satisfied with help received from the Red Cross, but many OCONUS spouses were dissatisfied with AER funding. Overall, a large majority of waiting spouses felt they managed well during ODS; OCONUS spouses rated themselves better than did CONUS spouses in handling daily activities. Handling personal loneliness and maintaining children's after school activities were handled the poorest by waiting Army spouses during ODS, both CONUS and OCONUS.

A large majority of ODS spouses reported a rapid and easy reunion with returning soldiers in the post-deployment period. Few attended Army reunion briefings or received printed materials on reunion from the Army. About one-fifth of ODS spouses reported difficulties with household and financial decision-making; one-fifth of parents had child discipline problems when the soldier returned home. Dissatisfaction with their marriages rose to 13% of spouses after ODS, with the biggest rise a doubling among OCONUS spouses. But, a very large majority - over four-fifths - were as highly satisfied with their Army marriages after ODS as before ODS.

Army divorce rates fell during ODS, rose for a few months after ODS, and then resumed a low pre-ODS peacetime rate in the post deployment period, in CONUS.

Spouses of non-deployed soldiers reported their sponsor worked longer hours and weekends because of ODS. Although they



generally managed well during the ODS period, these spouses had problems managing their own loneliness, doing volunteer work, arranging for child care and children's after-school activities. A majority felt that public and Army recognition for soldiers (and families) who did not serve in the Gulf was unsatisfactory. Their high rates of marital satisfaction and low rates of divorce did not differ statistically from responses by spouses of ODS-deployed soldiers.

### **Rank, Spouse Stress, and Commitment to an Army Career**

About two-thirds of SAF-II spouses wanted their soldier to make the Army a career, and very few wanted to leave the Army right away (6%); most spouses attributed similar views to their soldiers. Spouse satisfaction with the Army way of life was strongly related to rank-related variations in their Army career aspirations and Army life stress perceptions. Enduring spouse reasons for staying in the Army were: job security, retirement pay and benefits, and access to family medical care. Soldier job satisfaction was also cited frequently, but fluctuated with unit affiliation and factors such as soldier rank. Higher soldier rank had a modest positive effect on spouse sense of Army family support and the quality of Army-family interaction, as well as on overall spouse satisfaction with Army life. Lower soldier rank was weakly associated with greater spouse perceptions of stress, a higher self-reported psychological depression score, and lower spouse adjustment to Army life. The highest frequencies of distress occurred among Junior Enlisted spouses who tended to be the least well adjusted. Senior officer and senior NCO spouses held more favorable attitudes towards Army careers, but NCO spouses were more likely to feel concerned about involuntary separation due to Army downsizing.

Multivariate analysis showed that specific areas of Army program use and satisfaction affected by soldier rank included higher housing satisfaction among officer spouses who were also more likely to be homeowners. Spouse use of advance relocation services and unit Chaplains increased with rank. Spouse use of Army financial assistance was highest for junior NCO and junior enlisted spouses. MWR programs (especially post recreation and sports programs) were patronized disproportionately by career NCO spouses (E5-59). Participation in unit Family Support Groups was highest among officer and senior enlisted spouses and contributed to more positive perceptions of Army ODS family support.

A Comment Sheet attached to the SAF-II questionnaire elicited responses from two-fifths of respondents. Thematic analysis of written comments (compared to SAF-I comments) shows that many spouses had predominantly negative attitudes toward consistent themes raised, especially Army medical care, installation service providers, and Army leadership caring for families. New themes



in SAF-II revealed serious problems many spouses faced during ODS and highlighted emerging spouse fears about Army downsizing soldier job insecurity and Army family benefits erosion. However, comments about social problems in Army communities noted in SAF-I declined to nil in SAF-II. The highest percentage of positive spouse comments (40%) applied to the SAF-II Survey itself, seen as an Army means of communicating directly with spouse to improve the quality of Army family life.

### **Bottom-Line Applications of SAF-II Findings**

Key factors that strongly influenced satisfaction with Army life among civilian (mainly female) spouses of active duty soldiers were supportive interactions among unit family members, caring behavior and support information from unit and installation leaders, and respectful treatment by Army civilian employees, especially program service providers. Positive experiences with Army-family interactions, e.g., dealing with Army programs and units, raised spouse satisfaction and commitment to an Army career. Timely, accurate information on military and family issues reduced spouse stress during ODS, and enhanced spouse perception of Army support for families as well as their satisfaction with the overall quality of Army life.

Spouse skills in coping with various military stressors correlated with soldier rank and years spent in the Army. However, almost all spouses received little or no Army training to cope. Those who had received Army training of various surts did not feel the training was helpful or were not satisfied with the training they had received.

All SAF-II analyses, presented in this Summary Report show convergence of descriptive, qualitative, and quantitative results highlighting real progress in many Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) program and quality of life issues since SAF-I, and some clearly demonstrated areas of continuing and new spouse dissatisfaction with the Army. Sources of Army family problems and the support effectiveness of Army institutions distinguished CONUS from OCONUS spouses, e.g., ODS financial problems and moving away from post were more frequent in CONUS, while spouse use and confidence in unit FSGs was lower OCONUS. The **bottom-line** is that despite powerful new combat deployment and organizational change stressors, more Army spouses felt satisfied with their Army as a way of family life in SAF II (1991-92) than in SAF I (1987), in part a result of improved Army-wide and specific support programs for family quality of life.

Spouse perceptions of the Army are subject to significant improvement in the following leadership actions and policies:

- 1) **Training:** Train unit and installation Army leaders on

appropriate family support practices and institutions; train family members about coping with Army life and the value of participating in social support activities and programs, especially Family Support Groups; train civilian service provider employees on techniques to relate better to family member as respected consumers of Army services.

2) **Information:** SAF-II shows that command actions to disseminate accurate and timely information to all Army families have become crucial in the 1990's, a decade of uncertain contingency deployments and far-reaching Army reorganizational and cultural transformations. Accurate and useful Army information is especially critical for spouses and families of deployed soldiers, and for all soldiers and spouses on the implications of organizational and personnel downsizing for soldier retention and family programs.

3) **Applied Survey Research:** The Survey of Army Families, itself, has proved to be a valuable source of information and understanding about Army family support. It has delineated policy and program pathways to improved spouse satisfaction and family quality of life. Spouse comments on SAF-II indicate approval. Army policy makers and leaders can use these surveys to forge interactive modes of communicating with Army spouses and meeting emerging AFAP goals. The Survey of Army Families will continue to demonstrate positive Army family caring to the degree its in-depth findings are applied to enhance family and soldier satisfaction with Army programs and the Army way of life.

#### END NOTES

1. On 1 December 1990, four months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, an involuntary foreign tour extension was imposed on most OCONUS soldiers. Some time prior to then the decision had been made to deploy troops from units throughout USAREUR to the Persian Gulf. Although PCS moves out of the European theater were frozen, PCS moves into the theater were allowed to continue. This action was imposed to stabilize the force and to increase the operating strengths for OCONUS areas during ODS. This extension was lifted 1 June 1991. OCONUS family members were free to travel home during ODS. In fact, families of deployed soldiers were authorized one "Space Available" trip to CONUS on government aircraft during ODS. For the purposes of this analysis, the OCONUS respondent population is comprised of spouses who were in USAREUR before and during (all or part of) ODS, and spouses who arrived in USAREUR during ODS.